













JAN-FEB 2009

Issue No. 518



# *Latrobe Valley*

## *Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 27 February

Snakes – Sid Cook

Excursion: Saturday 28 February

Geology at Walkerville South. Meet 9.15am at higher level carpark **ready to leave by 9.30 SHARP** (Tides wait for no-one!)

Bird Group Excursion:

Tuesday 3 March to Crinigan Rd, afterwards to Wirilda. Meet Crinigan Rd carpark by **8.30 am**. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

Botany Group:

Saturday 7 March 10am at Wendy's, topic is grasses. Contact Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

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Meeting: Friday 27 March

**AGM.** Birds & Mammals of the Arctic – David Stickney

Excursion: Saturday 28 March

Visit to Wildlife Shelter at Rawson. Details TBA.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Dennis Nagle ☎ 5127 1525

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (MARCH): 13 MARCH 2009**

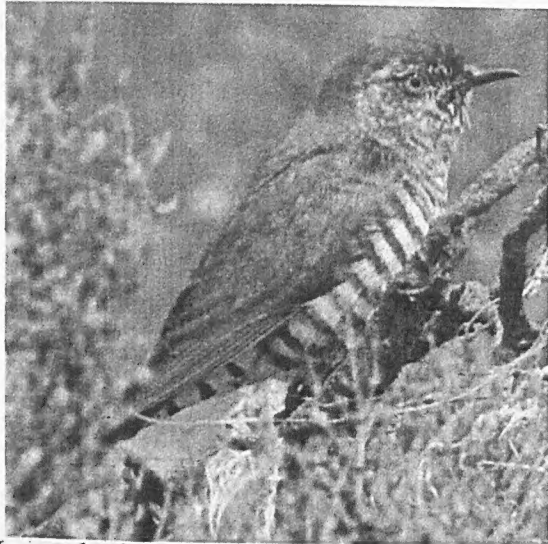
**LVFNC web page:** <http://home.vicnet.au/~lvfnc>



## A MUCH WATCHED BIRD

As part of the Spring Campout at Yanakie, we visited Shallow Inlet, mainly looking for migratory wading birds. As we walked across the salt flats, we heard three species of cuckoo calling, the Fan-tailed, the Horsefields Bronze and the Shining Bronze.

At the outermost point of our walk, the Shining Bronze-cuckoo was again calling, and Rohan Bugg asked if he should he call it up. He then proceeded to give a very accurate imitation of the cuckoo's call and lo and behold, the cuckoo came winging across the salt flats and landed on a saltbush right beside us.



I was lucky, I was in the very best position and this was a bird that I had much wanted the chance to photograph. I took 19 pictures, before stepping aside to give someone else the prime position.

The cuckoo was the most looked at bird in the area with binoculars, telescopes and cameras trained on it from all sides as you can see in this picture (which was not quite all the watchers, I couldn't fit them all in).



Ken Harris

## VALE NANCY BROOKS

Our club records the death of Nancy Brooks on 29 December 2008 in Warragul, at the age of eighty-seven. Nancy grew up in the Neerim district and developed a wide range of talents and interests across her long life. Besides her dedication to natural history and conservation, she had a fine singing voice and was both a trained dressmaker and tailor and keen photographer. Nancy adopted the principles and practice of permaculture gardening early in life, and later taught these to local groups based on her own garden.

Nancy, with her late husband Jack, who died at the beginning of 2005, were great partners in their commitment to conservation and to living in harmony with our increasingly stressed planet. We honour a life well lived and a kind and committed friend to many.

Several club members attended the commemoration of Nancy's life in Warragul on 2 January.

## RESULTS OF THE 2008 BOCA CHALLENGE BIRD COUNT DAY

Birds never recorded before in the LV - Dollar Bird and Scarlett Honeyeater, whilst Buff-banded Rail, Bar-tailed Godwit and Pink Robin- not been recorded before on Bird Challenge day.

Comparing the numbers recorded over the period 1998 to 2007, the 2008 figures show significant (generally ~ double or more) increase in the following 28 species:

Musk Duck, Freckled Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Pink-eared Duck, Grey Teal, Little Pied Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Swamp Harrier, Purple Swampphen, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Little Corella (increase x 7), Australian King Parrot, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, White-throated Treecreeper, Satin Bowerbird, Superb Fairy-Wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Spotted Pardalote, Eastern Spinebill, White-eared Honeyeater, Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail, Little Raven (? ID), Eurasian Skylark, Silvereye, House Sparrow.

Same areas covered as in 2007 with the addition of the TRUenergy Wetlands at Morwell Bridge and the Edward Hunter

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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Bushland Reserve in Moe and full access to the Moe Treatment Works.

**Group 1 Western:** Yarragon South, Uralla Reserve-Trafalgar, Trafalgar Sewerage Ponds., **Group 2 Southern:** Morwell NP, Mathison Park-Churchill, Brodribb Rd Wetlands, **Group 3 Eastern:** Traralgon RRCR, Traralgon South, **Group 4 Northern:** Wirilda-Tyers, Crinigan Rd Reserve-Morwell, TRUenergy Wetlands-Morwell Bridge, Newborough, **Group 5 Central:** Edward Hunter Reserve-Moe, Moe Treatment Works, Lake Narracan, **Group 6:** IP Hazelwood-Morwell River Wetlands.

Nearly double the number (in 2007) of people took part. The experienced leaders now more practiced and experienced, with some very capable birders from South Gippsland. Many LVFNC club members and others had "no great knowledge of birds" but had been encouraged to join in.

More groups, so each group covered fewer sites than previously and were thus able to be more thorough and go at leisurely and more enjoyable pace. This year groups started earlier, between 7.30 and 8.30 am most finishing before 3.00 pm when those who wanted to made a big group at the IP Hazelwood Morwell River wetlands.

So the factors of additional sites, more experienced people, more observers, a longer overall period and more time spent in each area as well as good weather have contributed to our Latrobe Valley record of 137 species (nearly double that of our initial 1998 count) and 4727 birds (nearly four times the 1998 total).

The number of participants has increased to 45 enabling the record and more people to enjoy the BOCA Challenge Bird Count. Thank you to all participants and especially the group leaders and Mark and Kevin for "letting us in".

Alix Williams

## OWLS, FROGMOUTHS AND NIGHTJARS OF AUSTRALIA

Talk by David Hollands

David began his presentation by saying that he was suffering from a disease called owl mania. I think we are all pleased he is

because our knowledge and understanding of these nocturnal birds has increased immensely.

There are 17 species of owls, frogmouths and nightjars in Australia and David has seen and photographed each one of them. These nocturnal birds are among the most fascinating but highly elusive birds in Australia and David spent countless hours of patient observation, study and photography. They have often been difficult and dangerous birds to study at night and often at high elevations on fragile platforms.

His project has taken him over 20 years to complete since he first published the first Australian owl book – 'Birds of the Night' published in 1991. His most recent book 'Owls, Frogmouths and Nightjars of Australia' was the topic of his presentation.

Photographing Owls, Frogmouths and Nightjars has taken David to many remote and fascinating parts of the country. Birds are found in the wet tropics of far north Queensland to the temperate forests of Tasmania and offshore to Christmas Island.

In many cases there may not have been anybody with local knowledge but he was generous in his comments to acknowledge the help of John Young (famous for the blue-faced fig parrot). John would often do a reconnaissance of an area to find an elusive bird and then set up bird hides which might be over fifty metres up a tree. Timing is also important because there is often a very narrow window when breeding takes place.

Photographing Owls, Frogmouths and Nightjars was not without its problems. Although they are not shy they are usually cryptic and nocturnal and nest high in the canopy. David's attempts to get in flight pictures with the birds occupying most of the frame, sharply in focus and with an exposure short enough to freeze any instant in time have been extraordinarily successful. Using flash is essential and the only way to achieve focus and framing on a fast moving subject is to know beforehand exactly where the bird will be at the moment when the camera triggers. To achieve these remarkable photographs David would have to set an elaborate system of cameras, flashes and an infrared beam so that the bird



itself would trigger the camera. He would have to know the expected flight path of the bird, the speed the bird was going to fly so that when the bird broke the infrared beam, the camera would trigger at precisely the right moment.

Some shots were taken during the day but most were taken at night. David produced some of the most extraordinary and memorable owl photographs I have ever seen and his book presents many of these photographs of Owls, Frogmouths and Nightjars with an authoritative and readable essay on each bird.

There are 10 species of owl in Australia represented by two genera, *Tyto* – the Barn Owls and *Ninox* – the Hawk Owls. The Barn Owl is the most cosmopolitan occurring on all continents except Antarctica and has the most diversity in Australia with 5 species of *Tyto*. Australia also has 5 species of *Ninox* of which four occur on the mainland plus one on Christmas Island. The Christmas Island Hawk owl was only recognised as a full species in 1998 and the relationship of many of the species has still not been finalised. For example David has included the lesser sooty owl in his book as a separate species but it has only recently been lumped with the sooty owl.

Some of the highlights for me were the photographs of Powerful Owls with the remains of Greater Gliders hanging over a branch (with the tail strategically placed over the branch), the Barn Owls and Grass Owls flight shots carrying a mouse and the Sooty Owls carrying white-tailed Rats. Also many of the juvenile birds provided some delightful photographs but the young Eastern Grass Owl that would not win a beauty competition.

The most interesting aspect of David's talk was the research done on a huge pile of pellets, bones and prey debris below the back of the Jenolan Caves nest tunnel. The analysis has shown that the owls have been occupying this nest site for an astonishing period of some 20,000 years. Also of the 35 mammals identified, over a quarter are now locally or totally extinct.

Of the three species of Frogmouths, the Tawny Frogmouth is the most familiar, the

Papuan is the largest and the Marbled is the most cryptic. They are a strange group of birds related to the nightjars but only distantly related to owls. Their heads are large; their mouths are cavernous which are surrounded by prominent bristly feathers.

The Marbled Frogmouth must have been the most difficult of all the birds to find and study. They are only found in two locations, the mountain rainforests in south-east Queensland where they are rare and the top of Cape York Peninsula. Also they choose to nest in the wet season which means they have to be studied in the rain and access is often hampered by flooding rivers. However David was able to capture this bird showing how its plumage precisely matches the bark of a tree it was perched on.

There are also three species of Nightjar in Australia but they are probably the least known group of nocturnal birds. They are extraordinarily well camouflaged so they are rarely seen during the day while they are very fast flying at night. Our local white-throated Nightjar still eludes me although I was a frequent visitor to the breeding sites of the Nightjars in England.

If David had one message in his presentation it was to stop prescribed burning. He argued that the perception given to the public is that bushfires somehow mitigate the effect of bushfires. The argument is used that the Australian flora has evolved to cope with fire and that the burns must be somehow beneficial. Although David advocates the need for frequent burns to protect towns, farms and other human assets but he cannot see the justification for the massive and regular burns in remote country that is far from human habitation. He provided us with a vivid example of what the results of a bushfire did to a Sooty Owl nest tree at Ramrod Creek. The owls had been filmed at a nest hole and following a fire the tree had burned and smashed to the ground.

We are very grateful to David for his fascinating and entertaining presentation and many of us will have lasting memories through his book where many of the photographs have been reproduced.

David Stickney

## OPENING OF TRRCR INFORMATION SHELTER

The attractive new Interpretive Information Shelter at the Traralgon Railway Reservoir Conservation Reserve was officially opened on Wednesday 3 December. The facility, located just below the Hickox St. entrance and car park, blends well with the surrounding natural environment, incorporating wide columns of rock and timber platforms as frames for the interpretive display panels and views over the wetlands.

Guests were welcomed by MC Barry Dunstan, who first introduced club member John Lawson, a real stalwart of the Friends of the Reserve. John stressed the significance of the reserve to this and future generations, the latter represented by a student group from Grey Street Primary School in Traralgon. Paul Buckley, CEO of Latrobe City, commended the work of all those involved in the project, which was funded through a substantial International Power Flagship Award. IP was represented by its Executive Director Tony Concannon, who noted that the award reflected and recognized the enthusiasm and commitment of the Friends Group.

No fewer than three pairs of scissors were then produced for the three speakers to cut the red ribbon – which they did with perfect synchronization! The pleasant occasion concluded with lunch hosted by IP, and some guests took the opportunity to stroll down the lake to the enlarged bird hide near its northern end.

It is worth noting that club member Ken Harris provided many of the photographs incorporated into the excellent panels.

Philip Rayment



## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 24.11.2008

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 27 February:** Snakes – Sid Cook

**Saturday 28 February:** Geology at Walkerville. Meet 9.15 at Walkerville South (higher level carpark) – ready to leave at 9.30 SHARP.

**Friday 27 March:** AGM. Birds & Mammals of the Arctic – David Stickney

**Saturday 28 March:** Visit to Wildlife Shelter at Rawson. Details TBA.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 7 March 10am at Wendy's, subject grasses. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 3 March 8.30 at Crinigan Rd Reserve, afterwards to Wirilda. Thursday 19 March bird surveys at TRU Wetlands and Bush Block.

Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393  
alixw46@netspace.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1,648.22. Investment A/c \$11,567.59.

### Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence

Car pooling and fuel cost sharing for excursions – Phil tabled set of guidelines which were accepted, Phil will check on any problems relating to sharing fuel costs and third party insurance then complete document will follow for 2009.

SEANA Spring camp Oct 2010 planning – have requested \$500 deposit from SEANA to secure booking, and it has been approved but cheque has not arrived. Wendy is following up.

Program Planning for 2009 almost complete. Approach David Farrer for October speaker, and excursion for August will be Sale wetlands.

Old screen – John Poppins has purchased for \$50.

Naturalist – David has changed order to 90 copies for an extra \$5 so cost is now \$76 per run.

Endorsement of a national common position statement to permanently ban the recreational shooting of native waterbirds. Following the motion being passed at the GM our name has been added to the list of



organizations supporting this. Have been sent a progress report and the Federal Environment Minister indicated there would be federal involvement only where it affected matters of national environmental significance.

Purple diuris monitoring – Ken Harris reported Longford survey produced good results. Extra sites further along Longford Rd need to be included in next year's count. VicRoads continuing to slash Burgan. Report is available.

Club Spring camp 2009 to be accommodated at Camp Munjara at Glenmaggie. Cost is \$60 per person for a self catered camp. Need \$200 deposit to secure booking.

VicRoads Code of Practice tabled by David Stickney, no longer require permits to clear vegetation. Suggest club seek clarification on the one hectare clearing exemption. Concern on how this will be dealt with.

Posters of Gippsland Naturalists – Phil approached Monash library re placement of Centre for Gippsland Studies resources. No decision of final housing at this stage.

Photo competition will be dealt with in 2009 by organizing committees. Also set up committees for SEANA camp and Club History for 50<sup>th</sup> year.

David Hollands bird books can be purchased – order forms available at GM.

## Conservation Matters

None

## SEANA GATHERING AT HEALESVILLE

The Spring gathering of the South-east Australia Naturalists Association was based at the Badger Creek Hall near Healesville and hosted by the Ringwood Club. We made our own accommodation arrangements. Tea and coffee were available all weekend at the hall and there seemed to be an endless supply of biscuits, cake and fruit pieces.

Guided tours of Ringwood Sanctuary were led by members of the Ringwood Club who belong to the Friends' group. The Sanctuary has changed somewhat since we last visited it about 30 years ago and we were impressed with the veterinary centre and operating theatres where the public are

able to view what is happening through glass walls. Much work is being done with endangered species: we saw the mother of the recently born Tasmanian Devil and walked through aviaries containing Helmeted Honeyeaters and Orange-bellied Parrots. In February, they hope to release into the wild 20 young Helmeted Honeyeaters.

Other excursions were to Badger Weir, Donnelly's Weir, Donna Buang and Cement Creek, Murrundindi Scenic Reserve, Fernshaw and Dom Dom Saddle, and Mt St Leonard and Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk. During this last excursion we lunched at Toolangi where we were able to visit the informative Forestry Display Centre, open that weekend because it was the C J Dennis celebration. While there we were also shown a newly discovered species of Pomaderris which, until recently, had been accepted as belonging to one of the other species. Its main habitat is in the pathway of the north-south pipeline so those in control of that project are busily propagating it so it cannot be used as an excuse to delay construction. Bird life was prolific but there were few wildflowers or fungi because of the dry weather.

At the SEANA meeting we were informed that the next gathering will be in Port Fairy in March, 2009. Hosted by the Warrnambool club, it will be two weeks after the long weekend because of the music festival in Port Fairy that is on then. In October 2009, the Hamilton club will be hosting the gathering, probably based at Dunkeld. March 2010 will be hosted by the Ballarat club, again after the long weekend because of the Begonia festival; and in October 2010 it will be hosted by Latrobe Valley club, 50 years after our inauguration.

Estelle Adams

## NOTICE OF AGM 27 MARCH

Positions for re-election:

President

Vice President No1

Assistant Secretary

Treasurer

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Broome Bird Observatory	Wendy Savage	516 Oct
Clash of the Titans	Ken Harris	514 Aug
Down Memory Lane – A Likely Story (from 1964)	Ellen Lyndon	516 Oct
How Do Birds Navigate?	Margaret Rowe	510 Apr
Morwell River Wetlands March Excursion	David Stickney	512 Jun
Owls of Boola Boola Forest – Talk by Narelle Weston	Philip Rayment	509 Mar
Where Eagles Dare	Ken Harris	516 Oct

## BOTANY

DNA in Flora	Bon Thompson	511 May
October Botany Excursion to Heyfield	Ken Harris	517 Nov-Dec
Orchid Count 2007	Bon Thompson	508 Jan-Feb

## ENVIRONMENT & ECOSYSTEMS

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Fire and Fauna – Talk at Wilson's Promontory 23.2.08	Ken Savage	510 Apr
Study of Dowd Morass – Talk by Paul Boon	Jenny Porter	513 July
Traralgon Creek NEIP Excursion	Philip Rayment	515 Sept

## EXCURSIONS

April Excursion to Morwell River Falls & Boolarra South Property (Pt 1)	Wendy Savage	513 July
“ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ (Pt 2)	Wendy Savage	514 Aug
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Sunday morning	David Mules	511 May
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Monday	Ken Harris	510 Apr
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## INVERTEBRATES

A Spider at a Field Nats Meeting	Ken Harris	511 May
A Voracious Assassin	Ken Harris	513 July
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## MISCELLANEOUS

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Jean Galbraith's Early Writing (Talk by Dr Meredith Fletcher)	Philip Rayment	516 Oct
Walls of Jerusalem NP – Talk by Philip Rayment	Julie Parker	512 June

## REPORTS

President's Report	David Stickney	511 May
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# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: savage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mrs Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number has changed.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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MAIL**

MARCH 2009

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contact Alix ☎ 5127 3393.

Bird Group Excursion:

Tuesday 7 April to Crinigan Rd, afterwards to Wirilda.  
Meet Crinigan Rd carpark by 9.30am EST. Contact: Alix  
Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

Botany Group:

Saturday 4 April 10am at Jack and Marja's, 129 Briggs  
Road, Nilma North. Subject is seeds. Contact Wendy  
Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

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Meeting: Friday 24 April

Excursion: Saturday 25 April

Moths – Peter Marriott

**Evening** moth trapping excursion to Morwell NP. Meet  
**5.30 PM** for BBQ tea at Kerry Rd picnic area. Moth  
trapping will take place at the picnic area after dark.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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### FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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### HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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### FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (APRIL): 10 APRIL 2009**

**LVFNC web page:** <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

## THREATENED ORCHIDS OF WEST GIPPSLAND

Kylie Singleton, Biodiversity Officer with DSE in Traralgon was our guest speaker in September 2008. She is involved with the Threatened Orchid Recovery programme in West Gippsland, of which there are 12 species (3 leek-orchids, 2 spider-orchids, 2 sun-orchids, 3 greenhoods, 2 pale golden moths and 1 late helmet orchid).

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) receives Federal funding to assist with the recovery programme and is in partnership with Parks Victoria, the Royal Botanical Gardens, the Zoo and the Melbourne, Victoria and RMIT Universities.

Wonthaggi Heathlands, Mullundung State Forest and Wilson's Promontory are but three of a dozen known locations of threatened orchids in West Gippsland.

The Recovery Team is very pleased with the increased knowledge they have gained since commencing the programme, eg by:

Demographic monitoring

Isolating fungal symbionts

Establishing captive breeding programmes

Seed collection.

In actively managing sites, plants are caged to protect them from herbivores, ecological burning is undertaken and also shrub encroachment controlled

### Case study of *Caladenia orientalis* (Eastern Spider-orchid)

The recorded locations in West Gippsland of this threatened orchid are Wonthaggi Heathlands, Cape Liptrap Coastal Park, Wilson's Promontory National Park and Gellion's Run at Hedley.

**Description:** "This orchid is up to 30cm tall with a single narrow leaf at the base of a hairy stem bearing 1-3 large, pale yellow-green spider flowers. The orchid occurs in coastal and hinterland areas and flowers from September to November."

The chief threats to *Caladenia orientalis* include inappropriate fire regime, grazing, slashing, habitat fragmentation, soil compaction and natural pollinators.

**Population:** In 2004 there were 3 known plants at Wilson's Promontory. By 2007 there were 22 plants, at Wonthaggi Heathlands 150 plants. Currently no orchids were observed at Gellion's Run but they "keep looking".

### Recovery Actions:

Annual surveys at all locations

Ongoing monitoring throughout the year

Tagging, caging and exclusion plots

Slide baiting (conditions permitting)

Hand pollination

Seed collection and storage

Collar sampling (fungi)

Ex situ propagation

Pollinator trials

Ecological burn

Engaging Friends group as at Wonthaggi to assist with orchid recovery

Media releases

Radio interviews

Empowering agencies to identify orchid populations and implement management.

Kylie also gave us an outline of *Caladenia tessellata*, the Thick-lip Spider-orchid, and also *Thelymitra epipactoides*, Metallic Sun-orchid, both threatened species.

With all this information we were set for a most enjoyable excursion to Wonthaggi the next day which was published in The Naturalist October 2008.

Mary Austin

## MULLUNDUNG STATE FOREST EXCURSION

On a warm sunny day on 25 October, approximately fifteen members and friends gathered at Gormandale Hall for an excursion to one of our club's favourite springtime sites, Mullundung State Forest, including the Flora and Fauna Reserve (FFR). We were fortunate to be joined by David Farrar, the Parks Victoria Team Leader and Ranger for the East Coastal Plains section of South Gippsland. He has been based at Foster for about 18 months, and his role carries responsibility for 25 reserves, focusing on threatened species and management of pest plants and animals.

Our first stop was approximately 1 km along Anzac Road, east from Old Rosedale Road. David noted that the Mullungdung FFR is an important reserve for biodiversity conservation as it contains several threatened species. He is looking to involve groups such as ours in monitoring fieldwork, and mentioned that the FNCV Fauna Survey Group is monitoring bandicoots, reptiles and frogs. David is keen to log records from club members, and we drew his attention to earlier sightings of the Chestnut-rumped Heathwren.

The extremely dry spring was all too evident at this first stop, as at all subsequent sites visited. Even the steep gully west of Harraps Highway was parched. By contrast with our spring 2003 excursion, plants in flower were few and far between. Sightings included a solitary Spotted Sun-orchid, *Thelymitra ixioides*, the Common Rice-flower, *Pimelia humilis*, and Candles, *Stackhousia monogyna*, together with the leaves only of a Small Tongue-orchid. A nearby cluster of *Banksia serrata* even showed signs of stress in the dry conditions.

Our second stop was at the Harraps Hwy junction with Anzac Rd, an important spot for plants. We added to our list a rather emaciated Brown Beaks Orchid, *Lyperanthus suaveolens*, and enjoyed watching a female Scarlet Robin active at her nest.

At David's suggestion, we next headed south along Big Tower Road, Goodwood Road and Masseys Road to the start of Jimmys Track, where we had lunch and then wandered about 300 m east into a recently burnt area. This positioned us within the FFR, proving to be a more rewarding site, displaying more Spotted Sun-orchids and three *Caladenia* species, White Fingers, *C. catenata*, Pink Fingers, *C. carnea*, and the Musk *Caladenia*, *C. gracilis*.

Time permitted one final shorter stop at the Big Tower picnic area, allowing the addition of a further sun-orchid, the variable *T. brevifolia*, in bud to our limited list for the day.

Philip Rayment

## MT NICOLL EXCURSION

One of the great pleasures of being a member of the Field Naturalist Club is that it provides us with the opportunity of exploring some of the local parks and reserves in our region. Members of our Club are widely distributed and we often use the local knowledge of our members. Such was the case on our November excursion when Rowan Bugg, who was leading today's excursion, introduced us to Mount Nicoll.

Mount Nichol is situated on the South Gippsland Highway on the high pass between Meeniyan and Foster. The walk up to the top of Mount Nicoll normally offers some of the most scenic views in Australia. It overlooks Corner Inlet and Wilson's Promontory to the South-east and Andersons Inlet and Philip Island to the west. It was not the case on our excursion because the low hanging cloud persisted for most of the morning and limited our views.

The walk to the top of Mount Nicoll was a relatively easy climb and a short distance but we continued the walk along Loader track to Mount Hoddle. The Loader Track has only been open for a few years and was originally constructed by the prison farm. Since the prison farm has been closed the track has become a little overgrown and quite steep in places.

The dominant eucalypt species in the reserve was Gippsland Mallee – *Eucalyptus kitsoniana* with good understorey. Also many plant species were in flower including the Gippsland Mallee which attracted many small bird species.

Bird watching in this type of rain forest is always difficult because it is often difficult to see the birds through the vegetation. However listening for bird calls is much more successful but it does require more experience. For example we heard three species of Whistler (golden, rufous and olive) but I didn't manage to see any. We also heard five species of Honeyeater – lewins, crescent, yellow-faced and little and red wattlebird and only managed to see the red wattlebird on one occasion.

The flowering eucalypt attracted large parties of nectivorous and insectivorous



birds of many different species. It gave us a good opportunity to differentiate the Brown from the Striated Thornbill which were feeding together. There are also grey fantails attracted to these groups of birds because the other birds will disturb the insects.

Bird calls are important in any environment and it was the call of the Blue-winged Parrot that caused us to look up and see the birds flying fast overhead. The call of the Bronzewing was heard but often difficult to differentiate between the Common and Brush Bronzewing. They both have a soft booming call but the Brush Bronzewing calls at a higher frequency.

Like true field naturalists we could not help botanising and Ken Harris found some special plants seen on the Loader Track. As we ascended Mt Nicoll an interesting little plant with four-petalled white flowers was found and proved to be quite common on the mountain and its neighbours. It looked a bit like a *Boronia*, but it proved to be the Hairy Mitrewort – *Mitrasacme pliosa*. This is an interesting little plant, getting its name from its seed capsules. There are two ovaries and their stigmas arch over and join together. This gives the seed capsule the shape of bishop's mitre, which explains the name.

Orchids were not common and the only species seen were the Common Bird Orchid – *Chiloglottis valida*, the Slender Sun-orchid – *Thelymitra pauciflora* and the Common Onion-orchid – *Microtis unifolia*.

Heading across paddocks back to the cars Ken investigated a little water hole which had swamp plants around its edge. Several interesting plants were found, including Swamp Crassula – *Crassula helmsii*, Water Buttons – *Cotula coronopifolia*, Common Cotula – *Cotula australis*, Toad Rush – *Juncus bufonius* and the most interesting, the Austral Brooklime – *Gratiola peruviana*, a fleshy plant with pink tubular flowers.

Finally on the bank beside the end of the track Ken found an interesting little daisy, the Hairy Solenogyne – *Solenogyne gunnii*. The plants had no flowers but carried ripe seed, but we didn't miss much by not seeing the flowers as the flowers have no petals and remain greenish when open until turning brown as the seeds open.

We saw many other plants and it looks an area well worth a visit earlier in the spring when more delights might be uncovered.

During lunch at Foster the rain which had threatened us all morning became heavy and persistent so the visits to the remaining bush reserves were abandoned. Many members went home after lunch but those that remained were treated to some exceptional bird watching from the relative protection of the bird hide at Toora. The hide provides 270 degrees viewing of the beeches and salt marshes of Corner Inlet. This was another site that I was not aware of so thanks to Rowan for introducing it to us.

There was a small group of about 30 bar-tailed Godwits in a small inlet close to the bird hide with two smaller birds which we thought were Red Knot. We could also see a large mixed flock of Chestnut and Grey Teal which gave us an opportunity to differentiate these two species. There were also Sooty Oystercatcher, Caspian Tern and three species of Cormorant close to the hide. The last bird we saw was the bird of the day spotted by Jackie and identified by Rowan was an Australian Spotted Crake. The bird gave us some excellent views in the open as it walked around between the salt bushes.

We would like to thank Rowan for leading this excursion following his interesting talk on Cape York the previous night. Also thanks to Ken for contributing the botanical part of this report.

## Bird List

### Toora

Pelican	Sooty Oystercatcher
Great Cormorant	Bar-tailed Godwit
Little Black Cormorant	Red Knot
Little Pied Cormorant	Silver Gull
Grey Teal	Caspian Tern
Chestnut Teal	Aust Spotted Crake
(14 species)	

### Mt Nicoll

Australian Wood Duck	Golden Whistler
Pacific Black Duck	Rufous Whistler
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Grey Shrike-thrush
Brush Bronzewing	Eastern Whipbird
Yellow-tailed Bk-C'too	Brown Thornbill
Gang-gang Cockatoo	Striated Thornbill
Galah	Striated Pardalote

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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Crimson Rosella	Crescent Honeyeater
Blue-winged Parrot	Lewins Honeyeater
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Yellow-faced H' eater
Laughing Kookaburra	Little Wattlebird
Bassian Thrush	Red Wattlebird
Common Blackbird	Australian Magpie
Grey Fantail	Grey Currawong
Eastern Yellow Robin	Common Myna
Olive Whistler	Common Starling

(32 species)

David Stickney

## NOTICE OF AGM MARCH 27, 2009

Positions vacant: President, VP No1,  
Assistant Secretary, Treasurer.

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 23.2.2009

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 27 March: AGM.** Birds & Mammals of the Arctic – David Stickney

**Saturday 28 March:** Visit to Wildlife Shelter at Rawson. Meet 10am outside DSE offices, Parkers Corner. More details available at GM.

**Friday 24 April:** Moths – Peter Marriott

**Saturday 25 April:** Evening moth trapping excursion in Morwell NP. Meet 5.30pm for BBQ tea at Kerry Rd picnic area. Moth trapping will take place at the picnic area after dark.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 4 April 10am at .  
Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 7 April at Crinigan Rd, afterwards to Wirilda. Meet 9.30 EST at Crinigan Rd carpark. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1,978.67.  
Investment A/c \$11,926.49.

### Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence

Car pooling and fuel cost sharing for excursions – document is to be distributed at GM for members' comments. Will ask if members would like specific guidelines re costs of car pooling.

SEANA Spring camp Oct 2010 planning – deposit has been paid.

Summer Camp at Caringal report – thanks to Alix for her organization of successful camp. 67 people attended the FOBB Wildflower Walk.

Parks Victoria Kookaburra Awards, which recognize people who have made an outstanding contribution to Vic Parks system – club will nominate Ken Harris.

Set up organizing committees for a Photo Competition, SEANA camp and Club History for 50<sup>th</sup> year. Ask for volunteers at GM.

SEANA committee – Phil has accepted an invitation to nominate to go on the committee, as Norma Garlick from Sale FNC has completed her term.

AGM – positions vacant are President, VP no1, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer. Nomination forms at GM.

Bird Challenge report – record number of species (137), numbers (4727) and participants (45). Thanks to Alix for her organization of this.

Archivist – Delma is no longer able to hold this position. Will ask for a volunteer.

Discussed possible impact of fires on programs (botany, birds and general program). May need to consider this during the year.

Eric Lubcke Reserve – write letter to Latrobe City Council asking for an update on progress on the Management Plan implementation.

Sheets for write-ups for speakers and excursions to be completed at GM.

Wellington Shire, plant pest minimization project – asking people to keep an eye out for new and emerging weeds. Will table it.

Duck shooting season has been announced despite low duck numbers due to continuing drought.

Friends of Tyers SP have obtained historical information from Bon Thompson for a brochure to place in the park.

### Conservation Matters

VicRoads Code of Practice – no longer require permits to clear vegetation of certain amount. Jackie could not attend meeting, but sent in our concerns to be raised.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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## Additional matters raised at General Meeting

Bird Survey Training day attended by Denis Nagle. Friends of Tyers SP are planning bird surveys at 10-15 sites starting in Autumn which will require a survey each season of the year. Volunteers welcome, and some training in survey techniques can still be given.

Rob deSouza-Daw suggested club could donate money to assist the flora and fauna affected by the recent local bushfires. Discussion included wildlife shelters or vets dealing with injured animals. Committee to investigate further.

Maryvale Mill CCG meeting report by John Poppins – new owners are Nippon Paper. Large new pulping plant is in operation, and its improved chemical treatment creates a smaller environmental footprint. John has detailed maps of the pine and eucalypt plantations affected by the recent bushfires, which had a substantial impact – available to interested members.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR APRIL

**Peter Marriott.** Peter's interest in natural history stems from his childhood in the 1950s when living on a farm in Parkdale and spending a lot of time in and around Gembrook. As a primary teacher he taught in rural and urban schools where he developed these interests further with birds and plants but did not become specifically interested in *Lepidoptera* until the late 1980s. Since that time he has collected and photographed moths and butterflies extensively and has become very familiar with the Victorian fauna. He works one day a week in the Melbourne Museum moth collection and has begun publishing books aiming to figure the entire diversity of the Victorian moth fauna. He is also president of the Entomological Society of Victoria.

## WILDLIFE SHELTER EXCURSION

Some notes re what's required.

Entry to the Southern Ash Wildlife Centre by donation of leaves.

**Species required** Manna Gum- *E.viminalis* widely distributed, Southern Blue Gum- *E.globulus* found locally in

plantations, Messmate Stringbark- *E.obliqua* very common in the area, Peppermint (narrow- leaved)- *E.radiata* very common in the area, Peppermint (broad- leaved)- *E.dives* – generally to the north of the Valley, Swamp Gum- *E.ovata* generally in poor drainage areas, Silvertop- *E.sieberi* – common especially to north, Mountain Grey Gum- *E.cypellocarpa* – in hills around the Valley

Reference: L. Costermans: "Trees of Victoria- an illustrated field guide"

**Requirements for collection:** Delivered fresh. When cut into 2ft to 4-5 ft lengths, lift to keep clean (don't drag on ground). Avoid road sides and leaves that are dirty. (plastic bins/buckets for short term storage gratefully received). Good idea to collect from private property or plantations, with permission, and let locals and/or Police know when and where you are collecting.

Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393

Email: [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

## ANN 2008

For eight days in May the Australian Naturalists Network met at Mary River, on the Arnhem Highway close to Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory. Almost 100 Field Naturalists from around Australia participated in the program organized by the Darwin Club. There had been some debate amongst their members about the best time of year to hold the event as the huge numbers of birds gather in the diminishing wetlands just before the wet season begins. Eventually, the earlier time was chosen because the weather was more endurable at that time, there would be a variety of wildflowers about for those interested in botany and there would still be a wide variety of bird life in sufficient numbers for all the "birdos".

Although some tourist venues were included in our itinerary, most of our activities and venues were similar to those that the local Field Naturalists knew and enjoyed during their own excursions. A drive down a dusty road would have little appeal to tourists but during visits to such out-of-the-way areas we found much of interest, including wildflowers, flowering shrubs and trees with several species of Grevilleas, a Hakea with a



cascade of green flowers, the Wild Kapok with its large yellow flowers, and *Calytrix microphylla* which was covered in “enameled” pink flowers, butterflies and a little dragon which froze on top of its termite mound until all the photographers moved away. A variety of woodland birds were recorded, a red-eyed frog had its peaceful life briefly interrupted and on the way home one day we startled a huge flock of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos. During visits to lagoons we saw many water birds and dragon-flies in gorgeous colours – yellow, bronze, red, green, and both pale and bright blue. Those of us from eastern States were surprised when we first heard the harsh call of the Blue-winged Kookaburra and someone suggested it should be taught to laugh.

Highlights of the program included seven presentations by indigenous groups, from a welcome ceremony in which we were invited to participate to walks in the bush to explain their use of the natural environment, and a guided tour by its aboriginal custodian of the rock art at the Ubirr gallery. Three different groups displayed their crafts to us. Although there were similarities, it was of interest to note the variations between the different groups depending on the types of vegetation which grew in their area, Kakadu in the east, the central wetlands and the Darwin area.

Our pleasure was increased by their inclusive desire to show and explain, to teach and help us better understand their culture and how their society works.

One of our best days was spent at Fogg dam, a low wall which divides a wetland and is wide enough for a bus to drive along. It was created when an attempt was made to grow rice in the Humpty Doo area. The experiment ended when the Magpie Geese kept coming in numbers and ate the crop. A long list of birds, both wetland and bush, were recorded, amongst them a black-necked Stork (Jabiru), Rainbow Bee-eaters, Flycatchers, Magpie Geese, the Comb-crested Jacanas walking across the lily pads and the Little Kingfisher. It was intriguing to watch from the tower the interaction between the water birds and crocodile looking for a meal. Although we had been

told it was not the best time to find fungi, in the surrounding forest we discovered a number of species, one beautiful one with a pure white underside and a shining brown within its flute. Spiders were plentiful with both St Andrews Cross and large orb spiders creating huge webs. A strange smaller spider had a bright, multi-coloured plate over its body.

A variety of subjects on the local area were presented at the evening meetings providing us with more background on the geology, flora and fauna. Of special interest were talks on the culture of the indigenous people in the Top End and the development of Kakadu as a National Park, working with the traditional owners as they decided which parts would be opened to tourists and how this would be done.

As well as enjoying an informative, educative program, we also enjoyed renewing friendships begun during previous ANN events. The next ANN gathering will be at Chinchilla in Queensland in Aug/Sept 2010.

For us, some of the most exciting bird sightings came after we had left Mary River. In Darwin Botanical Gardens a strange “Whoo, who” drew us to investigate its cause until we discovered a pair of Rufous Owls hidden in the shelter of the thick canopy high overhead. On our way south we were forced to stop by a flock of nine adult emus standing in the middle of the road and had to wait until they moved out of the way. A pair of Australian Bustards sheltered in long grass; as we came back for a better look, one sank from sight but the other stalked off in a stately manner. Very early one morning more than twenty raptors circled overhead, amongst them both Black and Whistling Kites and a Little Eagle. Towards dusk three Brolgas flew gracefully overhead and at remote Barkly Homestead a small flock of Major Mitchell Cockatoos with their exquisite pink and white plumage landed in a nearby tree.

Estelle Adams

**2009-10 SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE  
NOW DUE**

See inside back cover for full details.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: savage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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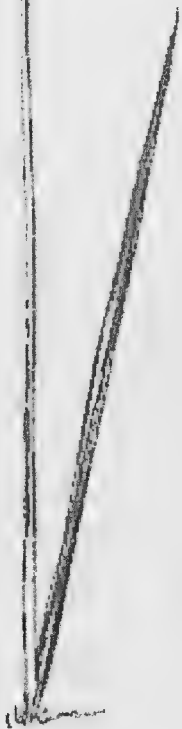
APRIL 2009

Issue No. 520



# *Latrobe Valley*

## *Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 24 April

Excursion: Saturday 25 April

Moths – Peter Mariott

**Evening** moth trapping excursion to Morwell NP. Meet **5.30 PM** for BBQ tea at Kerry Rd picnic area. Moth trapping will take place at the picnic area after dark.

Bird Group Excursion:

Tuesday 5 May to Heyfield Wetlands, then Cowwarr Weir. Meet at the wetland carpark by 9.30am. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

Botany Group:

Saturday 2 May 10am at Tims' property, Yarragon South. Subject is Botanical Terms - Leaves. Contact Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

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Meeting: Friday 22 May

Excursion: Saturday 25 April

Bandicoots – Rolf Willig

Trafalgar Water Trust. Meet 10am Sunny Creek Rd turnoff from Princes Hwy, west side of Trafalgar.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Dennis Nagle ☎ 5127 1525

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

---

HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (MAY): 8 MAY 2009**

**LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>**

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

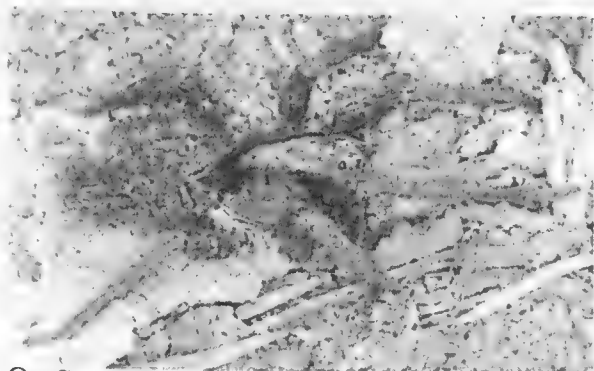
## SUMMER CAMP 2009 at CARINGAL SCOUT CAMP by Ken Harris

Summer Camp this year was held at the Carrungal Scout Camp. The camp started dramatically as we could here an unusual bird call, three shrill whistles, repeated again and again from below the lodge. We descended to the river to search for it and eventually David Mules found a Collared Sparrowhawk high in a pine tree.

A short walk from the camp found one very special orchid, the Yellow Leek Orchid – *Prasophyllum flavum*, which is an uncommon species. It was a fine specimen a metre high in full flower.



The evening spotlight walk was not very successful, the only creature found by the spotlight was this female Wolf Spider – *Venatrix funesta*. What made her special was the she was carrying her brood of tiny spiderlings clinging to her abdomen.



On Saturday we spent the morning exploring Snowball Falls about 5 km north of the camp. It was an area of wet sclerophyll forest under mountain Ash – *Eucalyptus regnans*, I recorded some 73 plants, although these included a number of roadside weeds. Ferns were many and varied and we found some 17 different ferns:

Mother Spleenwort	<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>
Lance Water-fern	<i>Blechnum chambersii</i>
Ray Water-fern	<i>Blechnum fluviatile</i>
Fishbone Water-fern	<i>Blechnum nudum</i>
Strap Water-fern	<i>Blechnum patersonii</i>
Hard Water-fern	<i>Blechnum watsii</i>

Common Raspfern	<i>Doodia media</i>
Rough Treefern	<i>Cyathea australis</i>
Batswing Fern	<i>Histiopteris incisa</i>
Austral Bracken	<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>
Soft Tree-fern	<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i>
Shiny Shield-fern	<i>Lastreopsis acuminata</i>
Mother Shield-fern	<i>Polystichum proliferum</i>
Finger Fern	<i>Grammitis billardiarei</i>
Bristle Fern	<i>Crepidomanes venosum</i>
Kangaroo Fern	<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i>
Long Fork-fern	<i>Tmesipteris obliqua</i>

Special among these were the Long Fork-fern which most of us only saw through binoculars across the other side of the falls and the tiny epiphytic Bristle Fern on which we were able to find the tiny flask-like spore-bearing organs with a slender bristle emerging.

Other special plants were the Forest Bindweed – *Calystegia marginata* and the Twining Silk-pod – *Parsonsia brownii*, both climbers although on a different scale the twining silk-pod climbing to the tree-tops, while the bindweed only climbs to a metre or two.

Butterflies were not common, although there were several common Browns on the wing, but David Mules photographed a Swordgrass Brown and also an interesting Moth, the Magpie Moth – *Nyctemera amica* which feeds its caterpillars on Senecio species especially Fireweed – *Senecio linearifolius* which was growing nearby. Then the most exciting butterfly appeared, a



Macleay's Swallowtail – *Graphium macleayanus* with its lovely pale green and black wings. It was feeding on blackberry flowers and several of us tried to photograph it, but it was always on the move. I did get a

reasonable picture, but this one taken the next day on Mt. St. Gwinear shows the butterfly better.

In the afternoon we went for a walk along a track that followed the East Tyers River. A great variety of plants were found beside the track. I recorded 90 species between the walk and the area around the camp. The Eucalypts were mostly Manna Gum with a few Narrow-leafed Peppermints, but rainforest species were present with Myrtle Beech and Sassafras both present in small numbers. Ferns were fewer than the morning walk, but three ferns not seen in the morning were common:

Maidenhair Fern	<i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>
Gristle Fern	<i>Blechnum cartilagineum</i>
False Bracken	<i>Calochlaena dubia</i>



To me the most interesting plant was the Forest Pennywort – *Hydrocotyle geraniifolia*. I had not seen this plant before, and although obviously in the carrot family, it does not look at all like the other *Hydrocotyles*. It doesn't have penny shape leaves and does not remain prostrate on the ground. It is an open plant half-climbing among other low vegetation to 30 cm or more. I couldn't identify it until I got back to my books in the camp.

Hardly any orchids were seen, the wet sclerophyll shrubs being the dominant plants. Austral Mulberry – *Hedycarya angustifolia* was common and the Broad-leaf or Mountain Tea-tree – *Leptospermum grandifolium* was flowering nicely, although it took a while before we could identify it with certainty as it mostly grew on the far side of the river.

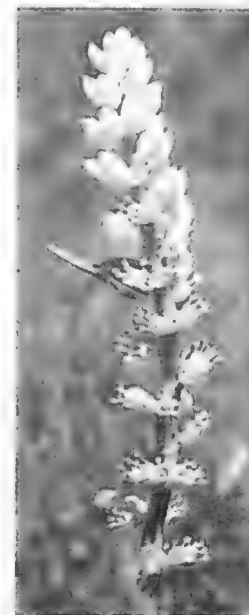
Again we did not see many butterflies, but dragonflies were quite numerous along the

river. I managed to identify one by getting its photograph and it proved to be the Small Tiger-tail – *Eusynthemis brevistyla*.



On Sunday we joined the Friends of Baw-baw for the annual wild flower walk. Some 67 walkers met up at Parkers Corner before driving up to the Mt. St. Gwinear car-park. We were accompanied by two experts for the day, botanist John Davies and zoologist Dr Greg Hollis and they provided useful information during the walk.

The day was perfect, with bright sunshine without being too hot and hardly any wind. At the start of the track, Ken Smith showed us the Green Bird Orchid – *Chiloglottis cornuta* and the Mountain Greenhood – *Pterostylis monticola*, both in flower. As we



walked up the track masses of Grass Trigger-plant – *Stylidium graminifolium* were in flower and several Macleay's Swallowtails were flitting from flower to flower. They were very hard to photograph as not only were they a very short time at each flower, but they kept on shivering their wings each time they landed.

Many wild flowers were seen. The heaths, the Epacridaceae, were particularly noticeable with the Candle Heath – *Richea continentis* giving the best display.



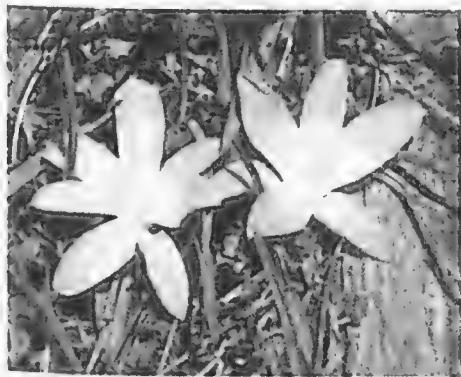
Daisy-bushes were also common especially *Olearia algida* and *Olearia phlogopappa* with just a few *Olearia megalophylla*.

The Mountain Tea-tree - *Leptospermum grandifolium* was common on the mountain, although much smaller than the riverside plants we saw the day before.

Other attractive shrubs in flower were the Alpine Bottlebrush - *Callistemon pityoides*, the Alpine Starbush - *Asterolasia trymaloides*, Alpine Orites - *Orites lancifolia* and the Alpine Mint-bush - *Prostanthera cuneata*.

The herb layer included several daisies including the Silver Snow Daisies - *Celmisia* sp., the Fringed Carraway - *Oreomyrrhis eriopoda*, the Snow Gentian - *Chionogentias muelleriana* and the Broad Eyebright - *Euphrasia gibbsiae*.

At a lower level still were lots of Ivy-leaved Violets - *Viola hederacea*, the tiny little Creeping Fanflower - *Scaevola hookeri* and the beautiful little Sky Lily - *Herpolirion novae-zelandiae*.



After lunching on top of Mt. St. Gwinear, we continued to the rock shelter. By the shelter we found the plant which most belongs to the Baw-baw plateau, the Baw-baw Berry - *Wittsteinia vaccineacea*, but none of the plants we saw had either flowers or fruit. Some of us then proceeded down to the Tullicouty Glen. At the track side we saw the Mountain Plum-pine - *Podocarpus lawrencei*. We hoped to see fruit, but the only sign of any flowers was perhaps the remnants of the male cones.

Down in the glen several peat swamp plants were seen, the Sphagnum Moss - *Sphagnum cristatum* showed as yellow cushions among

the other plants. In one such cushion was found the Alpine Sundew - *Drosera arcturi*, with flower buds, but no flowers. Another attractive plant was the Alpine Baeckea - *Baeckea gunniana*. The one we saw was a prostrate form with a flowering branch spread across a granite rock.

We then made the long walk back to the car-park delaying for a moment to try once more to photograph the Macleay's Swallowtails on the trigger plant flowers.

I can provide full plant lists for all three walks to anyone interested.

## CARINGAL SCOUT CAMP - BIRD REPORT by David Stickney, illustrated by Ken Harris

### Friday

Our arrival at Caringal Scout Camp was greeted with a persistent shrill three note call. Those who



went to investigate the source of the call were able to find the bird and identify it as an adult female sparrowhawk.

The bird was sitting high up in a mature pine tree and the calls continued for several

hours on Friday and throughout Saturday. There was some variation with two note calls and the occasional four note call but more commonly a three note call. We were all curious for the reason for the call and we failed to find any nest or sighting of a male sparrowhawk.

The birds around the campsite were more common and easier to see than the surrounding bush with greater diversity. The parrots occupied the middle and upper canopy including crimson rosellas and king parrots. The yellow-tailed black cockatoos were feeding on the pine cone seeds leaving fragments of cones on the ground and the

gang gang cockatoos feeding on the pods of an acacia species.

We were shown an active bower of a satin bower bird festooned with bright blue objects from various sources (most were man made and probably purposely left out). This is typical of the bower of a satin bower bird but one wonders what blue decorations they would have found before man's intervention. The male bowerbird made a brief appearance which was the only one we saw during the weekend.

## Saturday

The morning's excursion we drove up Buckles Spur Road to Snowball Falls and continued along the track to South Face Road.



The ubiquitous yellow-faced honeyeater could be heard with the occasional golden whistler which made a theatrical appearance as it hopped among the branches on a low hanging branch over the track.

In the afternoon we walked along the West Tyres Track until the track became too overgrown for us to continue. The birds were infrequent except for the yellow-faced honeyeaters and grey shrike thrushes until we returned to the camp site. Most of the group observed a juvenile shining bronze-cuckoo being fed by a brown thornbill. The brown thornbills build a small fragile domed nest and one can only speculate at how a bird that is nearly twice the size can be successfully reared by such a tiny bird.

In the evening the sparrowhawk continued its constant vigil, the yellow-faced black tailed cockatoos continued screeching and chattering while the gang gangs and sulphur-crested cockatoos made the occasional flybys.



Striated Thornbill on the slope below the lodge.

## Sunday

### St Gwinear

The Alpine regions support very low numbers of species in small quantities. Most of the birds were altitudinal migrants who migrate to higher altitudes to breed and take advantage of the food supply. An example was the flame robin which is a common breeding bird at high altitudes in alpine woodlands and adjacent grasslands. Most will descend to more open woodlands in the autumn. The most common bird at the lower altitudes was the white-cheeked honeyeater which could be heard around the car park and the lower slopes. It was replaced by the crescent honeyeater at higher slopes and on the plateau. Other birds heard from the car park were a lyrebird, whip bird and spotted pardalote.

Most of the walk was conducted in silence except for the continuous buzzing of the march flies which were profuse. There was the occasional interruption with the loud clinking call of the grey currawong but very difficult to see in the dense foliage of the snow gums. Near the top of St. Gwinear, several of us heard a shrill whistling call and we searched the tree-tops in vain. The bird then popped up from below the shrubs and showed itself close by for a moment. It proved to be a male Olive Whistler, although it didn't stay to have its photo taken!

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

Bird do fly over the Alps such as the spine-tailed swifts seen by some at the summit of St Gwinear and three yellow-faced black tailed cockatoos flying low on their way to more productive feeding grounds.

However the birds can be surprising as I watched one bush when out popped a white-browed scrub wren followed by a brown thornbill and then a silvereeye. It was a mystery why they had decided to congregate in this bush while the rest of the plateau remained relatively deserted. The scrubwrens appeared different to ones I had seen at lower altitudes with spotted striations on the breast, yellow on the belly and strong facial markings.

The walk concluded at Tullicoutty Glen which was a typical alpine glen which was treeless with the tree line higher up on the slopes. The reason for this is the cold air convects down to the basin where it can be 15C to 20C colder than the peaks – too cold even for snow gums. There was only one bird at Tullicoutty Glen which was a Richards's pipit. I watched it catch a dragonfly and watched try to remove its wings. It then stood erect on top of a tussock for about ten minutes with the dragon fly's extended abdomen hanging down. It then scurried down and reappeared on top of another tussock before disappearing into its nest I assume.

The Baw Baw frog is now extinct on the plateau succumbing to the chytrid virus. The virus has been spread by the common froglet which appears to be somewhat immune to the virus. This has the double disadvantage in first of all infecting the Baw Baw frog and secondly displacing a common and widespread species in their habitat. The only area it still survives is in the forest area on the south face where there are no common froglets. Dr Greg Hollis had conducted work on tracking the Baw Baw frog which significantly increased our understanding of the frog's life cycle. The frogs appear to be localised and require a narrow temperature band (3C to 7C) to survive which is why global warming remains a significant threat to their survival.

It was a very successful and enjoyable day with a near record number of 67 people

attending (I was told that the record was 75). We would like to thank Neville Daly from the Friends of Baw Baw for organising the day and Andy Gillam from Parks Victoria. We would also like to thank John Davies who had flown in from Tasmania (sponsored by Parks Victoria) and Dr Greg Hollis for their invaluable contribution.

## Caringal Bird List

Collared sparrowhawk	Crescent honeyeater
Sulphur-crested cockatoo	New-holland honeyeater
Yellow-tailed black cockatoo	Eastern spinebill
Gang-gang cockatoo	Eastern whipbird
King parrot	Yellow robin
Crimson Rosella	Golden whistler
Blue-winged parrot	Rufous whistler
Shining bronze-cuckoo	Grey shrike-thrush
Wonga pigeon	Satin flycatcher
Superb lyrebird	Magpie lark
Kookaburra	Grey fantail
Boobook owl	Rufous fantail
Black-faced cuckoo-shrike	Willie wagtail
White-throated tree creeper	Australian magpie
Superb fairy-wren	Dusky woodswallow
Spotted pardalote	Welcome swallow
Striated pardalote	Bassian thrush
White-browed scrubwren	Common blackbird
Large-billed scrubwren	Silvereeye
Brown thornbill	Common starling
Striated thornbill	Satin bowerbird
Red wattlebird	Common myna
Lewin honeyeater	Pied currawong
White-cheeked honeyeater	Grey currawong
Yellow-faced honeyeater	Little raven
White-naped honeyeater	

## St. Gwinear Bird List

Yellow-tailed black cockatoo	Rufous whistler
Gang-gang cockatoo	White-cheeked honeyeater
Crimson Rosella	Crescent honeyeater
Superb lyrebird	Eastern whipbird
Kookaburra	Flame robin
Spine-tailed swift	Richard's Pipit
Superb fairy-wren	Grey shrike-thrush
Spotted pardalote	Olive whistler
White-browed scrub wren	Silvereeye
Brown thornbill	Grey currawong

## SEANA SPRING CAMP 2-4 OCTOBER

Grampians/Gariwerd and environs, hosted by Hamilton FNC, to be based at the Grampians Retreat and Field Studies Centre at the foot of Mount Abrupt near Dunkeld.

Full details at a later date.

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 25.3.2009

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 24 April:** Moths – Peter Marriott

**Saturday 25 April:** Evening moth trapping excursion in Morwell NP. Meet 5.30pm for BBQ tea at Kerry Rd picnic area. Moth trapping will take place at the picnic area after dark.

**Friday 22 May:** Bandicoots – Rolf Willig

**Saturday 23 May:** Trafalgar Water Trust. Meet 10am Sunny Creek Rd turnoff from Princes Highway, west side of Trafalgar.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 2 May 10am at Tims' property, Yarragon South. Subject is Botanical Terms – Leaves. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 5 May at Heyfield Wetlands, then Cowwarr Weir. Meet 9.30 at the wetland. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1,931.67. Investment A/c \$12,117.76.

### Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence

Car pooling and fuel cost sharing for excursions – document has been presented at GM for members' comments, and no changes suggested so will implement it. Will publish in Naturalist in segments when space permits. Phil will act as initial excursion coordinator.

Parks Vic Kookaburra awards – Ken Harris has been nominated and application has been sent in. Award ceremony is to be held in May.

Archivist – this position is unfilled.

Eric Lubeke Reserve – have written letter to Latrobe City Council asking for an update on progress on the Management plan implementation.

SEANA camp at Port Fairy attended by 13 club members. Phil was elected to serve 3 years on SEANA committee.

Organizing committees – volunteers so far are:  
Photo competition: Ken Harris, Alix Williams, Jean Bowles, David Stickney Ken Smith  
SEANA camp: Wendy & Ken Savage, Jackie Tims, David Mules, Phil, Gill, Ken Smith  
Club History for 50<sup>th</sup> year: Phil, Wendy, David Stickney (ask Bon & Ollie, Ellie)

Owl Surveys 2009 with Rolf Willig – members are welcome, details available from President.

Flora and fauna affected by bushfire – suggested at GM that we donate money for recovery. Considerable discussion of the matter took place, and it was decided to leave a decision

until further down the track, when unfunded areas in line with the Club's aims and objectives become apparent. It was felt that the bush will regenerate naturally, and animal rescue has been well funded through public appeals.

Peninsula FNC have offered to grow seedlings from local seed for revegetation after bushfires and asked for a contact in this area. Suggested putting them in touch with local Seedbanks or Graeme Rowe.

Rawson Wildlife Shelter – no more gum leaves required for koalas as being supplied locally.

Jean Galbraith's home 'Dunedin' at Tyers impending sale. Club should take some interest in what happens to historical memorabilia. Phil will discuss with Bon.

### Conservation Matters

Royal Commission on Bushfires – Jackie will put in submission re concerns about possibility of extensive prescribed burning and clearing of roadside vegetation. Jackie will circulate draft by email.

Mullundung was bulldozed with extensive firebreaks during the bushfires and threatened orchid sites of *Pterostylis chlorogramma* have been devastated.

Parks Vic is preparing a new plan for all Alpine National Parks. Input to an evolving management plan can be made through [www.weplan.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.weplan.parks.vic.gov.au) Can feed in to drafts as they are produced.

### GUEST SPEAKER FOR MAY

**Rolf Willig** is Acting Biodiversity Manager for West Gippsland with the Department of Sustainability and the Environment. After completing his HSC in 1974 he undertook a motor mechanics apprenticeship for four years before studying Behavioural Sciences at Latrobe University. During postgraduate studies his work as a research assistant first brought him into contact with bandicoots. Since then he has maintained his interest with them and is running an ongoing project at the DSE aimed at maintaining viable populations of the Southern Brown Bandicoot. Rolf is best known to members of the local Field Naturalists as the organizer of the annual Owl surveys.

**PLEASE NOTE: SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR  
2009-10 ARE NOW DUE**

See inside back cover for full details.



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: savage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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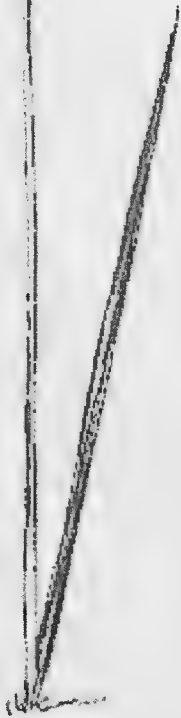
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MAY 2009

Issue No. 521



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



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# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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## LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 22 May

Bandicoots – Rolf Willig

Excursion: Saturday 23 May

Trafalgar Water Trust. Meet 10am Sunny Creek Rd turnoff from Princes Hwy, west side of Trafalgar.

Bird Group Excursion:

Tuesday 2 June to Morwell NP – Billy's Creek. Meet at the Junction Rd carpark by 9.30am. TRU Wetlands & Bush Block survey Thur 18 June. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

Botany Group:

Saturday 30 May – looking at fungi in Morwell NP. Meet 10am at Kerry Rd carpark. Contact Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

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Meeting: Friday 26 June

Landscape Design/Land Management – Indigenous Design. Alan Noy & Mark Bradbury will both speak.

Excursion: Saturday 27 June

Related excursion to Morwell River Wetlands. Meet 10am carpark off the Strzelecki Hwy.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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## FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Dennis Nagle ☎ 5127 1525

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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## FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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## SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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## FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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## HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

---

## FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (JUNE): 12 JUNE 2009**

**LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>**



## ANOTHER PREDATOR IN THE GARLIC CHIVES

Last year I reported on the many insects visiting my garlic chives as they flowered in the autumn of the year. The focus of my article was the Assassin Bug, who lurked among the flowers and preyed on the flies (and bees) that visited the flowers.

My garlic chives were back in flower again at the start of March, so I had a look to see who might be visiting this year. I immediately noticed a beautiful little green Praying Mantis, the Garden Mantid – *Orthodera ministralis*, sitting on the flower-heads and looking like a green leaf among the flowers.



It seems the garlic chives had another hungry predator waiting to see who would come to feast on the flowers!

As I watched a few other insects visited the flowers. Cabbage White butterflies – *Pieris rapae* came a few times, but not on the flower head with the Preying Mantis.



The Yellow-banded Dart – *Ocybadistes walkeri*, one of our smallest butterflies also paid a few visits but avoided the mantis. This photograph was taken on *Lythrum hyssopifolia* flowers alongside the chives.

There was no sign of the many Muscid flies I saw last year, but one of the Flesh flies, a *Sarcophaga* species paid a visit to the flowers.

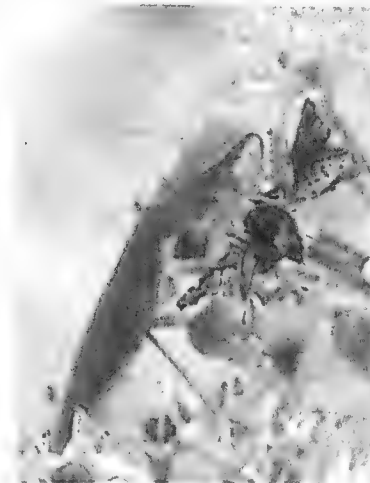


I went inside and processed my photos, and then decided to watch for a while and see if I could see the mantis catching its prey.

The sun was still on the flowers, so I watched to see what might come. I was very pleased when the first arrival was a White Grass-dart – *Tractrocera papyria*. This little skipper is even smaller than the Yellow-banded Dart and it was the first

time that I have definitely seen one in my garden, making it the 28<sup>th</sup> butterfly species my garden has welcomed.

While I watched, this little butterfly kept coming back again and again to the garlic chives, and gave me plenty of photographic opportunities. It visited many different flower-heads, but for a long time it avoided the plant where the mantis lurked.



After a time however, it did land on the flower-head next to the mantis. I thought it was safe as it was off to the side, but suddenly the mantis struck sideways and my first visiting White Grass-dart was no

more!

Above is the mantis a second or two after striking at its prey (I wasn't quick enough to catch the actual attack).

Ken Harris

## VALE RON COURT

The club records the death of former member James Ronald (Ron) Court on 12 April, aged 88 years. Ron's deep appreciation of our natural environment was expressed in part through his interest in stereophotography and its application to creating beautiful three-dimensional images of orchids and other flora and fauna. Many members will recall his inventive fabrication of equipment for this work – and its use at club displays at local community events.

Having graduated with a Diploma of Engineering, Ron and his wife Beres began their marriage of 65 years in the idyllic construction town of Bogong – Ron was employed in the construction of the Kiewa Hydro-electricity Scheme. They later moved to Morwell, where Ron's SECV career developed further. In later years, Ron gave much to the community of Victoria through his design and fabrication of mechanical aids for disabled people. Such work as this was formally recognised in recent years through the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia and of an honorary doctorate by the Victoria University of Technology.

We extend our condolences to Beres and their family.

## EXCURSION REPORT: COASTAL GEOLOGY OF WALKERVILLE

"Can you see that this rock is different from this rock?" This was the most often asked question on the occasion of the club excursion to coastal Walkerville on Saturday February 28, 2009.

As it happened the first two candidates at our northernmost locality on the beach just north of the Bluff were very different. The dark grey Lower Devonian age Liptrap Formation rocks, being mudstones, shales, sandstones and pebbles, are clearly layered and, on the wave cut platform and in the cliff face, show intense small scale folds and faults, probably caused by continental drift

to the north east. The sediments were laid down on the floor of a deep sea about 385 million years ago. These Liptrap Formation rocks now form the bedrock for the ridge extending from Cape Liptrap to the north under the Latrobe Valley and beyond. They were part of prolonged marine deposition events over much of southern Victoria: the older variations outcrop to the west of Melbourne with a tendency for younger rocks of this series to occur further east.

At this Walkerville North locality these Liptrap rocks are overlain, not by rocks, but by yellow Tertiary Pliocene age sediments consisting of unconsolidated non-marine, gravels, sand and clay (similar to the Haunted Hills). They were laid down in shallow fresh water only about 7 to 3 million years ago. Apart from a thin band of pebbles at the base of the deposit, layering is not evident and so of course neither is folding or faulting.

These two formations terminate abruptly at the Bluff where a major fault (with its associated shatter zone) arcs across Waratah Bay to the Toora escarpment and beyond. This fault is a major factor in the formation of Bass Strait and marks an abrupt transition to the Lower Devonian age Waratah Limestone Series which consists of three distinct limestone members. Limestone is a sedimentary rock which formed in shallow seas largely from the remains of shells and/or coral.

The Bluff member is the youngest of the three members. This is a very hard dark grey limestone, flecked with white calcite in places. In a few isolated spots it contains clearly visible fossils of coral reef.

Nearby the Kiln member of the Waratah Limestone Series outcrops. It is a light grey, almost white limestone, with a high calcite content and so was the most desirable for the lime producing industry. Fossils are not well preserved. At the top of the quarry wall are more Tertiary Pliocene sediments - a yellow and a grey layer both of which outcrop on the beach.

Both the Bluff member and Kiln member were quarried, with six kilns operating from 1878 until 1926, peaking in the early 1890s. Lime was used in Melbourne in mortar,

plaster and washes. By 1900 the surrounding area had been stripped of timber. Wood, and later coke, were shipped in.

A lime kiln is like a huge upturned bottomless bottle with a small opening on one side of the bottle neck. Alternating layers of wood and limestone were layered in the kiln from the upper level tram lines and the wood burned to heat the limestone which turned to quick lime. Each kiln had its own bagging shed which was connected by the lower level tram lines to a storage shed and the jetty (which was bent to avoid a rocky reef).

Unseen under the sands of the Walkerville South main beach is the transition to the oldest member of the Waratah Limestone Series, the Bird Rock member. This is a massively bedded brown muddy limestone, too impure for the lime producing industry. There is considerable evidence of folding, fracturing and cave and chasm formation. In a few places it contains highly obvious shellfish fossils and fossils of coral reef. The cave exhibits the effects of ground water seeping along fault planes. Where fault planes intersect at a narrow angle wave action at intertidal levels has eroded material to form elongated caves.

At this stage a rising tide cut off exit from the cave, signalling that lunch was imminent. On the menu were ancient photographs and written articles outlining tall tales and true of the legendary past from when the lime industry activities were operating.

The three remaining localities were accessed by bush tracks and steps onto the beach. Back into the Bird Rock member of brown muddy limestone were more examples of massive bedding and cave and chasm formation. Only near the southern extremity of the limestone outcrop were wonderfully sculptured dark brown pebbles and rocks lying on the beach. They were formed when limonite (which is iron oxide, chemically like rust) in solution has permeated through faults and fractures and has infiltrated pebbles of the limestone to a depth of only a few millimetres.

To the south of the small bay south of Bird Rock is the start of Cambrian age altered

basalt (or greenstone). It is an under sea extrusion of lavas and tuffs at least 500 million years ago, making it amongst the oldest rocks in Victoria. Chemical decomposition of the basalt has altered its colour to dark green and provided the iron for the "ironstone" described in the previous paragraph.

Major fractures and/or faults in the greenstones together with erosion by wave action have resulted in chasms across the rock platform, and where fault planes intersect at narrow angles, a magnificent cavern. The small adjacent bay is possibly a similar structure with the very much bigger cavern having collapsed.

While much coastal vegetation was of interest, sea anemones in rockpools were admired, feathered friends were identified and a ladybird scrutinized for its size, the main thrust was, as befits a geology outing, along the lines: "Can you see that this rock is different from this rock?" Of course we could. They were different colours. Perhaps that's why one of them is called greenstone!

Graeme Rowe.

## TRU WETLANDS SURVEY

About ten of us turned up for the March survey of the Truenergy wetlands. A Mistletoebird lived up to its name by hopping around in a headhigh clump of mistletoe and only leaving most reluctantly after having all of us clustered around it taking photos and making loud comments. Darters and two species of cormorant perched in trees at the far end of the water. A single Hardhead stood out among the Coot, Black Duck and other water birds and we also saw a couple of female Blue-billed Ducks. In the distance, in trees above the bottom pondage, a White-bellied Sea-eagle was perched. Ken attempted to drive up close enough for a good photo but the eagle took flight as soon as the car door started to open. An abundance of Chestnut Teal and Coot had Pelicans, Spoonbills, Stilts and Moorhens scattered among them. The number of Black-fronted Dotterel was surprising with at least twenty, and possibly more flitting about feeding on the mudflats. As the last of the cars pulled away to leave the area the White-bellied Sea-eagle flew in

and Ken was able to vault the gate and get good photos. A most obliging bird.

David Mules

## Bird List 19.3.2009

Australasian Grebe	Galah
Little Black Cormorant	Eastern Rosella
Little Pied Cormorant	Welcome Swallow
Darter	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Great Egret	Australian Reed Warbler
White-faced Heron	Grey Fantail
Royal Spoonbill	Eastern Yellow Robin
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Golden Whistler
Black Swan	Grey Shrike-thrush
Australian Shelduck	Superb Fairy-wren
Grey Teal	Brown Thornbill
Chestnut Teal	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Pacific Black Duck	Mistletoebird
Hardhead	White-eared Honeyeater
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Red Wattlebird
Purple Swamphen	Grey Butcherbird
Dusky Moorhen	Australian Magpie
Eurasian Coot	Little Raven
White-headed Stilt	Common Myna
Masked Lapwing	Common Starling
Black-fronted Dotterel	Red-browed Finch
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	(43 species)

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 20.4.2009

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 22 May:** Bandicoots – Rolf Willig

**Saturday 23 May:** Trafalgar Water Trust. Meet 10am Sunny Creek Rd turnoff from Princes Highway, west side of Trafalgar.

**Friday 26 June:** Landscape Design/Land Management – Indigenous Design. Mark Bradbury and Alan Noy will both talk about their current projects.

**Saturday 27 June:** Related excursion to sites presented at the talk. Ken Smith will arrange meeting time and place this week.

**Botany Group:** Sat 30 May looking at fungi Morwell NP. Meet 10am Kerry Rd carpark. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 2 June at Morwell NP - Billy's Creek. Meet by 9.30 at carpark in Junction Rd. TRU Wetlands and Bush Block survey Thursday 18 June.

Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

**Finance – Balances:** No balances available as Treasurer away.

### Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence

Website can be made to work for Firefox, and Gavin Dinsdale, who set up website is willing to do it when he is supplied with program. Wendy needs to complete 2009 program update.

Archivist – this position is unfilled.

Eric Lubcke Reserve – reply from Simon Clark, Latrobe City Council. Indigenous Design will be conducting weed control works in April and May. No schedule on Management plan implementation as yet. Will let us know 2009/10 works schedule in the near future.

Jean Galbraith's home 'Dunedin' at Tyers – some historical memorabilia remaining with house has been sent to Jean's nephew, and some is in storage. The memorial seat which the club donated should be placed elsewhere. Bon suggests that it be positioned in the Tyers school grounds, as Jean had a lot to do with the school. Will send a letter. Suggest Saturday 9 May 2pm for the visit which Alix is organizing.

Peninsula FNC have offered to grow seedlings from local seed for revegetation after bushfires and asked for a contact in this area. Will put in touch with Landcare.

Parks Vic – Kookaburra Awards invitation – May 16 Mt Dandenong. Ken Harris and Secretary invited.

Photo competition – meeting April 9 chaired by Ken Harris. Minutes available, which give comprehensive details of the proposed format of the competition. Discussed sponsorship, but will probably fund from club's resources. Need a venue for putting on display.

Club history subcommittee meeting to be held May 6 at Phil's.

June Lubcke died on April 16. Funeral Friday 24 at St Andrews, Morwell.

Ron Court died on April 12. Phil and Gill attended funeral and will write a piece for the Naturalist. Will send a card.

### Conservation Matters

Bushfire submission – Jackie is still in process of writing it, and will circulate it when ready.



## GUEST SPEAKERS FOR JUNE

**Indigenous Design – Alan Noy, Managing Director and Mark Bradbury, Manager, Latrobe Valley.**

Alan Noy has worked within the environmental industry since its early growth over 30 years ago. He has extensive experience in the mining industry, playing a key role in the provision of advice for indigenous flora and fauna management in rehabilitation areas. He was instrumental in the design, implementation, restoration and monitoring of wetlands along the Morwell and Latrobe Rivers following the expansion of coal mining areas.

Alan commenced Indigenous Design in 1987 and developed the company into a full time business by 1995.

Mark Bradbury has worked in the environmental industry for over 11 years for Indigenous Design and conducted various volunteer conservation projects in the UK. He has extensive experience in revegetation works from the western plains of Melbourne to Lakes Entrance and has a broad knowledge of indigenous plants across the state. Mark moved to Gippsland 7 years ago to work for Alan in setting up a division of Indigenous Design.

## SEANA AUTUMN CAMP AT PORT FAIRY

About one hundred naturalists gathered at Southcombe Lodge in Port Fairy on the evening of Friday 20 March for the SEANA 2009 Autumn camp, hosted in fine style by the Warrnambool FNC. The lodge is an education centre located in Southcombe Caravan Park by the coast, close to Griffiths Island, the site of a major Short-tailed Shearwater breeding area. The centre was the venue for evening talks, meetings and dinners; the building does also incorporate a limited amount of bunk-style accommodation.

What follows is a brief summary of just some of the excursions and talks. Essentially the same excursions were offered on Saturday and Sunday – these were well varied and enthusiastically led by local naturalists.

## Boat trip to Lady Julia Percy Island (Saturday)

Fifteen participants headed out from Port Fairy wharf at 8am in fine weather with a mild sea swell, the destination being reportedly Australia's only submarine volcano. The lava flows have created an unusual flat top with almost vertical sea cliffs around the 5 km island perimeter.

Our boat moored for about an hour in a small bay from which occasional wildlife monitoring teams land and scale steep rock falls and cliffs to reach the "tabletop". Here we could watch many of the island's huge colony of fur seals at rest and play. Some of the seals climbed to surprising heights on the rock falls. The monitoring program indicates a population of typically 30,000 seals. The boat crew reported a larger than usual number of pups this year.

Whilst circling the island, we passed the eye of the volcano which is near the edge rather than inland. Birds seen during the cruise included Pacific and Kelp Gulls, Little Pied Cormorants and terns, together with an Australian Kestrel atop the cliffs in the bay in which we moored.

Our one-hour spells to and from the island were enlivened by sightings of dolphins frolicking in our wake.

## Beach area west of Port Fairy (Sunday am)

Local 'birdo' Barbara Garrett led an excursion to 'Matthew's beach', approximately 5 km west of Port Fairy and accessed through private property. This beach and rocky headland area is a great site for migratory waders, being out of convenient reach of the general public. It also happens to front one of the region's abalone farms.

Here we revelled in the opportunity to view Australasian Gannets diving low over the rough waters, a pair of Sooty Oystercatchers, Pied Oystercatchers, a flock of Red-necked Stints (Barbara explaining that these birds fly to the Arctic and so must build up good fat reserves here), an immature Kelp Gull, a Great (Black) Cormorant with its yellow facial skin, Ruddy Turnstone and Double-banded, Hooded and Red-capped Plovers and (certainly not least) Pacific Golden Plover.



The bush behind the beach afforded views of what Barbara identified as a Striated Field-wren, and also White-fronted Chats.

## **Tower Hill Reserve (Sunday afternoon)**

Guide and keen naturalist John Sutherland led an excursion to this well-known volcanic reserve in an area frequented by aborigines from 20,000 years ago – artefacts buried under ash have been recovered. To the aborigines, this was 'Burning Hill', a sacred place. Numerous eruptions of magma through a limestone layer occurred from ~33,000 to ~7,000 years ago, depositing many layers of ash/ scoria. John noted that, prior to clearing by white settlers through to around 1880, the Tower Hill area supported heaths and tree-fern gullies and plants such as yam daisies and chocolate lilies were an aboriginal food source.

Tower Hill has had a somewhat chequered history in terms of its conservation status. It was actually Victoria's first *declared* national park, although not *gazetted* until later than Wilson's Promontory and Mount Buffalo. Around 1960 its status changed to a state game reserve, providing better funding and in some respects improved protection – quarrying ceased and motorbike tracks were closed. Much native revegetation has occurred since 1960. Many birds of prey such as kestrels, wedge-tailed eagles and square-tailed kites nest at or visit Tower Hill. There is a healthy population of sugar gliders, assisted by the installation of boxes in trees. Koalas relocated from Kangaroo Island in the 1960s have bred well, necessitating further relocations and fertility control programs. Of some 250 recorded plant species, about half are invasions; Sweet Pittosporum, Italian Buckthorn and hemlock are problem weeds.

## **Kanawinka Geopark (Saturday evening talk)**

Joane McKnight is Coordinator of the Australian Geopark Network and Director of Kanawinka Geopark which is based on the volcanic regions of south-western Victoria and the south-east corner of South Australia. She began her talk by explaining that such parks are a recent UNESCO initiative, through the 2004 Beijing Declaration on Global Geoparks, intended to encourage enhanced understanding of earth sciences. Declaration of geopark status requires genuine community dedication to better management, protection and promotion (through education) of a thematic region. In 2005, Dr Susan Turner conducted public meetings in Hamilton and Mount Gambier to assess community support for such an initiative in that region. In December 2006 an application based

on the concept of a 26,000 sq km Kanawinka Geopark extending from Colac into south-eastern South Australia was submitted to UNESCO in Paris. Subsequently, in June 2008, it became the 57<sup>th</sup> member of the network of global geoparks. Other potential Australian geopark sites, such as the Warrumbungles and Lightning Ridge in NSW and the old volcanics around Daylesford in Victoria, are now being investigated. I must say that I greatly appreciated Joane's talk, not having previously heard about the geopark concept.

All in all, our Warrnambool friends are to be commended on running an enjoyable, informative and well organized camp.

Philip Rayment

## **BIRDS IN THE TOWN**

During the time of the fires we have had the birds using our bird bath more frequently. This may mean there are more of the same species. We cannot distinguish one from another in the species. We have also had two unusual birds. When we got up on Sunday morning there was Diamond Dove resting on the windowsill. Then on Tuesday we were visited by a Brown Goshawk which stayed around the garden for about half an hour. Even our magpie friends and the Rainbow Lorikeets, whom we thought had deserted us, have returned for at least daily visits.

Saturday evening of the fires our nephew Rob, who lives towards the edge of Traralgon near the Railway Reservoir, was spraying around the house because burnt leaves were falling and he was afraid embers may follow, when a green parrot, perhaps a King Parrot, landed on the clothes line. Rob said it looked exhausted with its wings spread wide and its mouth wide open. He was surprised it had enough strength to hang onto the line. Rob turned the hose to very fine spray and sprayed the bird. It took about ten minutes spraying before the bird lowered its wings and looked at all relaxed. He said the bird appeared to be drinking the water falling off its head. We do not know if it had been near the fires or if it was just the excessive heat of that day that had caused the bird so much trouble.

Bon Thompson

## **PLEASE NOTE**

**Subscriptions for 2009-10 are now due.**

See inside back cover for full details.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: savage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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JUNE 2009

Issue No. 522



# *Latrobe Valley* *Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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## LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 26 June

Landscape Design/Land Management – Indigenous Design. Alan Noy & Mark Bradbury will both speak.

Excursion: Saturday 27 June

Related excursion to Morwell River Wetlands. Meet 10am at the carpark off the Strzelecki Hwy.

Bird Group Excursion:

Tuesday 7 July to Blue Rock Dam. Meet by 9.30am. Turn right off Willow Grove Rd down the dam wall road to the big rocks at the pioneer Memorial. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

Botany Group:

Saturday 4 July – Sedges and Rushes. For details please contact Jackie Tims ☎ 5634 2628.

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Meeting: Friday 24 July

Southern Ark Project – Andy Murray

Excursion: Saturday 25 July

Mt Worth SP. Meet 10am Moonlight Creek carpark. Alix will invite Friends group.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

---

FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Dennis Nagle ☎ 5127 1525

---

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

---

FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

---

FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (JULY): 10 JULY 2009**

**LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>**



## MOTHS presented by Peter Marriott

Peter Marriott from Melbourne was our speaker in March 2009. Peter has developed a great interest in the Lepidoptera and has collected and photographed moths and butterflies extensively and has become very familiar with the Victorian fauna

He currently works one day a week in the Melbourne Museum moth collection, primarily working on the publication of a series of books, planned to figure the entire diversity of the Victorian moth fauna

The first book covering the Bombycoidea has already been published and was available for purchase after the meeting. Those of us with an interest in moths are greatly looking forward to the publication of further volumes. Peter is quite well advanced with preparing the next three books.

There are over 20,000 species of Moths in Australia in over 70 families, with over 2000 species in Victoria. By contrast Australia has only about 300 species of Butterflies.

Peter started by discussing the difference between Butterflies and Moths. He offered several criteria for distinguishing them: Butterflies have clubbed antennae; Butterflies rest with their wings folded above their back; Butterflies are brightly coloured; Butterflies fly during the day. For each criterion he showed us a butterfly, but then produced a moth that also matched each criterion. He then told us of the frenulum, which consists of one or more bristles at the base of the hind wing, which couple the wings together. The frenulum is found in all moths and is absent from the butterflies (well all but one apparently). In the Guide to Australian Moths they say that if it has clubbed antennae and no frenulum it is a butterfly - except for the male Regent Skipper from northern Australia. He finally concluded that butterflies are really just moths!

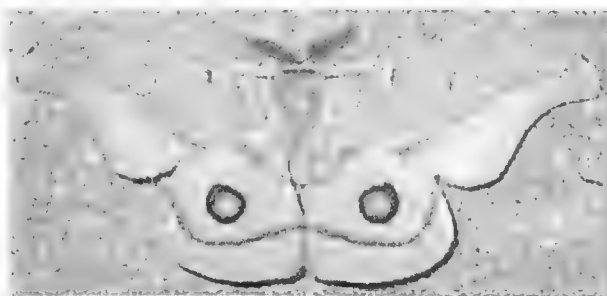
Peter then took us through a number of stories about different individual moths and their history in Victoria.

First he showed us a sedge from the big desert and then the tiny Brachodid moths whose caterpillars feed on the sedge. One

unnamed species of Brachodid was known from only 1 specimen in the museum recorded as from Black Rock in 1904. Axel Kallies went looking for them at the same site, but it was too developed now. Further searching led to the rediscovery of the Moth in a corner of a swamp at Langwarrin and subsequently another colony was found on French Island. The moths are still precarious, but are still with us.

Also in similar sedges at Langwarrin. Peter showed us an insect looking like a moth, but actually a Caddis Fly, quite a rare caddis fly, with the only other known locality being at the Prom.

His next story was of the Emperor Gum Moth - *Opodiphthera eucalypti* and its close cousin the Helena Gum Moth - *Opodiphthera helena*. He showed us how to distinguish the two species



The Emperor Gum Moth was a common species, but is no longer common at least in the Melbourne Area. The cause seems likely to be that they are being eaten, mainly as larvae, by European Wasps. The wasps apparently sting the caterpillars and when they fall off they feed on the remains.

The genus *Pterolocera* in the Anthelidae are an interesting group of moths covered in the first of Peter's books. They are known as Grass Anthelids, because their caterpillars feed on various native and introduced grasses. They are very hard to place to a species, because of large variation over their range. The females of this species are flightless and Peter described how this can result in a local population becoming isolated from other populations and then evolving into a separate species. Victorian *Pterolocera* are currently designated as in one of two groups, the Lined Group and the Reddish Group.

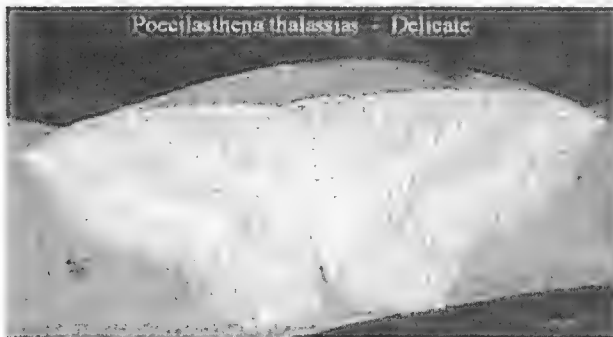
Peter showed us caterpillars of 5 different populations from around Melbourne and distinct differences could be seen between them all. He then showed a caterpillar that I had collected in Mathison Park in Churchill which was significantly different from the other 5 and yet when I reared it through to a male moth it was remarkably similar to others of the Lined Group.

It is suggested that these moths which are found in a broad band across Victoria and into South Australia, may have a different species every 300 kms. Peter suggested it might be a new species every 100 km!

Other moths Peter showed us were:

An Arctiid - *Anestia ombrophanes* which builds a very sparse cocoon around its chrysalis. This species also has a flightless female;

An Arctiid, stored in the Melbourne Museum as 1 species *Palaeosia bicosta*, but in Canberra, divided up into 3 species. Peter found that all 3 were represented in the Melbourne collection (2 of them were collected the following night in Morwell National Park);



A beautiful delicately marked Geometrid - *Poecilasthena thalassias*, which was unknown to Peter until recently, but now found at two locations. Museum specimen hardly recognisable as the delicate colour markings fade;

And finally he showed us a number of beautiful little Oecophorid moths sometimes known as Mallee Moths. These moths create a shelter for their caterpillars out of dried leaves, which then eat the shelter away from inside. They may be significant reducers of the leaf litter which helps to spread bushfires and yet they are destroyed by the too

frequent fires, which they would contribute to preventing.

Ken Harris

## KOOKABURRA AWARD - KEN HARRIS

We congratulate Ken Harris on receiving a Parks Victoria Kookaburra Award in the category of Individual Achievement for his contributions to Morwell National Park.

Parks Victoria initiated these awards in 1998 to recognise individuals and groups who have made an outstanding contribution to the Victorian park system. There are seven categories of award, made biennially, and Ken was nominated in this round by our club.

Ken joined the Friends of Morwell National Park at its inception in 1986, and has been a committee member for 23 years and president for 16 years.

Drawing on his considerable expertise in botany, Ken has identified and photographed all the known plant species, producing complete plant lists for the use of visitors to the park and to help guide the park management.

In 1997 he published 'Flowers and Ferns of Morwell National Park' featuring 384 of his own photographs and a complete plant list. This has sold well and significantly enriches the experience of many visitors.

Ken developed and continues to maintain the comprehensive web site [morwellnp.pangaeon.net](http://morwellnp.pangaeon.net), launched in 1999. This site includes early history of the park, maps of all the walking tracks, an illustrated key to the plant species found in the park, and an extensive data base of all known flora and fauna found in the park, with photographs of most species and detailed distribution information for all plants and animals.

He has played an important role in the park revegetation work, contributing to the planning of which species to plant in each site and guiding the collection of seed for propagating the plants, as well as helping with the plantings and weed eradication.

He has organized and participated in numerous Friends activities, involving and educating members of the public.

The well attended award ceremony was held on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May at the Skyhigh Restaurant in Mt Dandenong. Ken was accompanied by three members of the Friends of Morwell National Park and Ken Savage and I represented our club.

Our club can be proud that we have now had two members receive this prestigious award. In 2005, Jack Brooks posthumously received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his work in Mt Worth State Park.

It is worth looking up the Parks Victoria website [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au) to read about the past recipients of these awards and their achievements.

Wendy Savage

## BIRDS AND MAMMALS OF THE ARCTIC

David Stickney presented this talk after (1) being re-elected as president at the March 2009 AGM and (2) chairing the monthly meeting. He introduced the speaker (himself) and spoke on his cruises to the Arctic (Svalbard) in 2008 and Antarctica in 2007. He first showed how geology, climate and evolved species were also poles apart.

Above 80° north, few land masses encroach the frozen sea covering the north pole, whereas towards the south pole below 70°S, the surface is mostly ice-covered land. The Antarctica continent is 50% larger than Australia and when including winter sea ice, this doubles its size up to the Antarctic circle (~67° S). In the northern hemisphere, the sea ice normally extends only as far down as 80°N due to the warm Gulf Stream of the north Atlantic ocean. Svalbard becomes accessible by sea in summer where many of the excellent photographs shown were taken. This group of islands is about 70% the size of Tasmania and has a temperature range from +5 to -12°C giving a climate less severe than the same latitude south.

David explained why wildlife differed for the two poles. There are no land mammal predators on Antarctica hence some bird life (4 species of penguins) did not need wings.

However because of the distances from land masses, other birds (6 species) that did fly adapted glider wings (such as the wandering albatross with a 3.5m wingspan beautifully streamlined for low energetic dynamic soaring). The north pole region has predators causing different adaptations. This becomes clearer when considering the food chain.

Food chain. ↑	Arctic Fox, Glaucous Gull, Arctic Skua, Polar Bear
	Wader (6 species), Snow bunting, Ptarmigan, Geese (3 species), Reindeer
	Plants, lichens, mosses, crustaceans, molluscs etc

Sea ice was more extensive in 2008 and stopped earlier cruises that year from rounding Spitzbergen (west part of Svalbard). Problems occurred still, (1) the ship had to break it's way through to some areas, and (2) cliff dwelling birds, normally seen whilst cruising the central channel, were shrouded in sea mist and regrettably were only heard. David listed 24 bird species observed between July 19-28, all but one fly out for winter. This included 5 species of gulls (cf one in Antarctica). Within his mammal list were 4 seals and 3 whales. The photographs of the species were magnificent, and where David was less confident of identification, Ken Harris's wealth of knowledge filled in the few missing names. The pictures he selected showed key items for positive identification; for example the close up of the Arctic tern was taken while on the wing and this showed the line of black tipped wing feathers on the underside. Many birds nested in cliff colonies. Because of the short breeding season, clutches were large, colours of chicks provided camouflage, and nests were on the ground (no high vegetation). Large colonies limit losses and most birds were aggressive towards intruders.

The ship with 43 crew does both arctic and Antarctica cruises for 100 passengers. To land excursions, passengers were ferried ashore on rubber dinghies. The main settlement is called Ny-Alesund (79°N), it has a population of ~50 in winter, 100 in summer and is an international environment centre. For protection from polar bears, locals carry guns and visitors can hire these

at the local store. Any kills however are fully investigated. Huskies are used for transport around the icy countryside. Local attractions for tourists include a coal museum (Soviets mined coal in the past). There was a tribute to Amundsen for his crossing of the north pole in 1926 by airship in contrast to his trek to the South Pole. Svalbard is ~60% glaciated (receding for 40 years) but 400 million years ago it was on the equator. Glacial ice is blue due to refraction when first deposited but becomes clear with age and pressure. Polar bears need solid ice. Refuge huts (for whalers) needed reinforcing to limit damage from these massive animals. Males can weigh 700Kg (females half that) and are our largest land based predator.

Some of the **birds** shown (with brief comments) were:-

- guillemots (common and black species)
- little auk (eat crustaceans and there are ~10<sup>6</sup> nesting pairs on Svalbard)
- great auk (flightless and extinct since 1850s)
- Atlantic puffins (10<sup>4</sup> breeding pairs)
- black-legged kittiwake (eat fish, cliff nesting, black tips on wings, identified by a knob for hind toes)
- glaucous gull (grey/white top predator, eats anything)
- ivory gull (eats offal egg remnants of polar bear kills)
- northern fulmar (one of the tube nose birds, has short stiff wings, drinks sea water and has glands for salt removal. About 2x10<sup>6</sup> breeding pairs on Svalbard)
- Arctic terns (migrate further than any other bird, travelling to Australia for the northern winter and are aggressive towards intruders)
- arctic skua (also defensive)
- arctic jaeger (identified by pointed tail feathers)
- eider duck (the drake is black and white whereas the female is mottled, their soft nest is lined with breast feathers due to the unsuitable vegetation. Eiderdown filled pillows have these feathers)
- goose (black/grey) and bent goose
- sandpipers and dulin (waders)
- red-necked phalarope (males are less colourful)
- snow bunting (these migrate to Europe)
- ptarmigan (plumage is spotted fawn in summer but white in winter)

Some **mammals** (and comments) were:-

- arctic fox (grey in summer/white in winter, these feed on lemmings in Norway but here they catch and bury guillemots for their winter food)
- reindeer (shorter and stockier than on the mainland, eat diverse vegetation)
- polar bears (~3000 on Svalbard)
- seals (4 species, both earless and eared)
- walrus (3-4m and weigh up to 1.5 tonnes, protected since 1925, breed every second year, numbers have recovered to about 1500 on Svalbard, eat mussels and scallops. Tusks on males grow to 1m long)

David rounded his talk with some botany.

Ray and Delma Hodges

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 18.5.2009

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 26 June:** Landscape Design/Land Management – Indigenous Design. Mark Bradbury and Alan Noy will both talk about their current projects.

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# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$2791.21.  
Investment A/c \$12,117.76

## **Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence**

Website yet to be made to work with Firefox, but need to supply program to Gavin dinsdale. Wendy has completed 2009 program update.

Archivist – this position is unfilled.

Jean Galbraith's home 'Dunedin' at Tyers – visit on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> very well attended by 37 members and friends. Discussed memorial seat with Ollie Archbold and she will decide if it is best to stay in the garden or be placed in Jean Galbraith Wildflower Reserve across the road. The Archbolds have built a new house behind 'Dunedin'.

Secretary and Treasurer will be away for June and July.

Reports from representatives on committees – these used to be given at AGM and/or reported in Naturalist. Would like this to continue, so will ask reps to supply a brief annual report. Will update list of reps and liaison members who are involved with Friends groups.

Club History subcommittee meeting held 6 May at Phil's place. Phil presented report, which is available for anyone interested. Decisions were made regarding format and content and Phil is using archives to prepare information. Bon has supplied info on notable past members.

Summer camp at Omeo – have got advice re accommodation and excursions from friend in Omeo, and he recommended 3 or 4 motel/hotel types of places. Suggest that in addition to camping option, we provide details, prices and contacts for these places so attendees can book their own accommodation. Plan to arrange an evening meal at a restaurant at a fixed price. Will visit in the spring and plan excursions.

Photo competition – Ken Harris has prepared Draft Conditions of Entry in preparation for entry into the Naturalist. Discussed suitable sizes of photographs. Will invite input from interested members at GM.

Parks Vic Kookabura award – Ken Harris has been awarded the Individual Environment Award for his work in Morwell NP. Ken & Wendy Savage and 3 members of Friends of Morwell NP attended presentation at Mt Dandenong on Saturday 16 May. Article will be in Naturalist.

Uralla Nature Reserve request for funding for interpretive signage – letter requested \$1200 for 2 of the 6 signs planned to be placed in the reserve to inform visitors about its diversity of flora, fauna and habitat. Motion: That we support the request for \$1200 for interpretive signage. W Savage/A Williams. Motion passed.

Binding Naturalists – we have 4 years of Naturalists from 2005-2008 so these should be bound to match our collection. Will arrange for Peter Lendon to bind them, and provide a previously bound copy for him to replicate.

Speaker system – needs replacing. It is very old, and was bought second hand. Phil will investigate.

Postage payment for Naturalist – Bon suggested we investigate opening an account with Aust Post and have direct franking of magazines. David Mules will discuss pros and cons with Bon.

BOCA visit to area – members showed them around Crinigan Rd Reserve, Mathison Park, Morwell NP and Uralla Reserve. Ken Harris also stayed up at Rawson and gave them a talk on birds of Mathison Park. They were very pleased with the assistance, and have donated \$50 to the club.

Latrobe Region Bird List Project – Alix has started a process of making up a list for visitors to the region which will provide species, likelihood of sighting and sites. It will complement the Latrobe Region Book.

Friends of Tyers Park minutes: appears that bird surveys or monitoring have not been put in place yet.

## **Conservation Matters**

Bushfire submission to royal Commission has been sent. Jackie can provide copies for anyone interested. Have not had acknowledgement of receipt.



## GUEST SPEAKER FOR JULY

The Southern Ark Project is a major conservation initiative that aims to help the recovery of a suite of native mammals, birds and reptiles by significantly reducing foxes across one million hectares of public land in far east Gippsland. It is the largest fox control project to be implemented in south-eastern Australia. **Andy Murray** is the leader of the Southern Ark field team, and he oversees the on-ground implementation and monitoring of the project, and coordinates staff activities.

## FIRE IN THE TOP END

The deliberate burning each year of large tracts of land in the northern regions of Australia is becoming more and more controversial, especially as it is a major contributor to the output of pollution causing climate change. While at the ANN gathering, we heard the same story about its purpose from the local Field Naturalists, the National Park Rangers and the indigenous leaders. All seemed convinced that it was necessary.

Patchwork burning is used and it had just been started when we arrived in the Northern Territory in early May. The fires are lit in the late afternoon or early evening. They die down within a few hours when damp air descends after nightfall. By morning only smouldering logs remain alight and we saw fires at all stages. As we travelled, we passed areas which had been burnt a few weeks previously. Bright green regrowth, especially palms, showed that plants were recovering, but some trees without any signs of fresh leaves might have had more serious damage.

The explanation given was that a grass introduced from Africa, which they called Gamba grass, grows to a couple of metres high. It must be burnt at the beginning of the dry season (when it would be a cool burn) to reduce the fire risk towards the end of the dry season when all the vegetation has dried off and the fire would be fiercer. The much hotter fire would damage the native vegetation, possibly killing some of the trees. It was said that fire cleanses the country and renews the native vegetation. Unfortunately it doesn't

kill off the Gamba grass. The exotic grass was introduced as a pasture grass for the cattle industry. It has been declared a noxious weed in Queensland and Western Australia but the pastoral industry has a very strong voice in the Northern Territory and it is still allowed there.

At Katherine we visited the Gorge and a different reason for burning in the surrounding park was explained in the cultural centre there. All burning was stopped when the area became a National Park. At the same time the number of Gouldian Finches began to decline. Patchwork burning has now been reintroduced with the hope that the renewing of the vegetation will increase their numbers until they become prolific once more. That explanation was also given by the white crews on the boats on the gorge. We were told that some graziers burn at the wrong time and cause much damage.

Some people who live in those areas are opposed to the regular burning, as were some interstate Field Naturalists, so it was a "hot" topic for discussion.

NB. I am uncertain if the word Gamba is spelt correctly as at no time did I see it written.

Estelle Adams

## WILDLIFE ART EXHIBITION

Jim Blucher is exhibiting a full-size cormorant in an Australian Wildlife art exhibition to be held in the BOCA Gallery from 4-31 July. The exhibition opens at 1pm on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>, at 183 Springvale Rd, Nunawading.

## SEANA SPRING CAMP

2-4 October Grampians/Gariwerd, hosted by Hamilton FNC

## OUR CLUB SPRING CAMP

9-11 October Mt Hedrick

Details later

## PLEASE NOTE

## SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2009-10 ARE NOW OVERDUE

Membership will be cancelled if not paid.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: savage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to: Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number has changed.

Full Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Private) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$38 ☐ Single \$29 ☐ Junior/Student \$22 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

**CHEQUE ENCLOSED \$** (Made payable to LVFNC Inc)

*Subscriptions are due on March 1<sup>st</sup> each year. (Half fees apply for those joining after 31<sup>st</sup> August)*

**LATROBE VALLEY NATURALIST**

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JULY 2009

Issue No. 523



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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## LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 24 July

Southern Ark Project – Andy Murray

Excursion: Saturday 25 July

Mt Worth State Park. Meet 10am at the Moonlight Creek carpark. Alix will invite Friends Group.

Bird Group Excursion:

Tuesday 4 August to Maryvale Mill Settlement Ponds. Arrive by 9.15 for induction at main gate building. Please let Alix know in advance if coming. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

Botany Group:

Saturday 1 August – Ferns and Mosses field trip to Glen Nayook - meet 10am. Contact: Jackie Tims ☎ 5634 2628

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Meeting: Friday 28 August

Wader Conservation in Delaware Bay USA – Susan Taylor

Excursion: Saturday 29 August

Sale Wetlands. Meet 9.15am carpark at corner Princes Hwy & Whittakers Rd, Traralgon (Mexican Rest.) for car-pooling, or 10am at Lake Guthridge, Sale.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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## FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Dennis Nagle ☎ 5127 1525

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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## FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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## SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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## FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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## HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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## FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (AUGUST): 14 AUGUST 2009**

**LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>**



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2008 – 2009

This year we look forward to a busy year leading to our 50th 'golden' anniversary in 2010. The club has formed three subcommittees to plan and manage the three main activities of the club culminating in the SEANA Camp that the Club will host at Camp Rumbug in October 2010. The three subcommittees are the SEANA planning committee chaired by Wendy, the Club History committee chaired by Phil and the photographic competition committee chaired by Ken Harris. All three subcommittees have already made good progress and I would thank all members who have participated in the planning process so far.

Notwithstanding these planning activities the Club has set itself this year, we continue our regular meetings and excursions. We have provided members with a broad range of natural history topics throughout the year. This year provided more travel topics than previous years beginning with a talk on the 'Walls of Jerusalem' by Phil in March followed by some insights into the Broome Bird Observatory in August by Geoff McDonald and Cape York in November by Rohan Bugg. Other natural history topics were evenly spread with mammals – spot-tailed quolls by Jenny Nelson, botany – orchids by Kylie Singleton, reptiles – snakes by Sid Cook, geology by Scott Murray and ornithology by David Hollands. We also had a very informative talk on Dowd Morass by Paul Boon followed by a related excursion to an area we do not normally visit. It was a privilege to hear Meredith Fletcher's talk on the life of Jean Galbraith and we will look forward to the publication of her book.

A number of regular reserves together with a number of new reserves were visited this year. The regular reserves included Tyres Park, Wonthaggi Heathlands, Mullundung and new reserves included Mount Nicol and Dowd Morass. We also visited sites on both the Morwell River and Traralgon Creek which are the focus of the Neighbourhood Environment Improvement Plans (NEIP).

Our Summer Camp this year was held at Caringal providing an opportunity for a select group of members to view some interesting plants and birds. The camp

concluded with the annual botanical walk to the summit of St Gwinear. This year we had near record numbers attending the walk and representatives from Parks Victoria and Friends of Baw Baw to provide us with information on the natural history of the area. Our spring camp at Yanakie exposed us to a different environment than the sub-alpine region of our summer camp. We were able to complete our full program at Wilson's Promontory and Shallow Inlet. Most members will remember Rohan Bugg's perfect rendition of a shining bronze cuckoo and call it in at Shallow Inlet.

We continue to monitor our attendance records and I am pleased to report that our attendance has significantly increased at the Club's general meetings. The average attendance this year was 32.7 which was a 15% increase on last year's attendance of 28.5 members attending. The highest number attended the October meeting where 49 members came to hear David Holland's presentation on his latest book – 'Owls, Frogmouths and Nightjars of Australia'. The average number of members attending our excursions was also higher at 22.

Whereas last year was a busy year with the publication of our Latrobe Valley Nature Guide, the Club still has a significant number for sale. I am happy to report that, as a result of the sales so far, the Club has repaid its loans on the guide and covered the Clubs contribution of the publication costs. All future sales will now add to the Clubs revenues and place the Club in a stronger financial position. We would thank all members who have assisted in the distribution of the Guide and ask you to ensure that all our local retail distributors are fully stocked ready for the coming summer period.

The main focus of our conservation efforts this year has been the 'Cores and Links' and the bush fires. There have been several public meetings on the logging in the Strzelecki Ranges particularly at College Creek and we are disappointed the current Government has allowed logging to proceed in this area. The beginning of this year was marred by the bush fires that affected so many people in our region. To my knowledge none of our Club members were

directly impacted by the fires but for many of us it was a very distressing time. The two reserves mostly affected by the fires were the Traralgon South Flora and Fauna Reserve and Lyrebird Forest Walk. It is however encouraging to see the amount of regeneration in both those reserves after a short period after the fires. I would like to thank Jackie for continuing her role as conservation coordinator in this challenging time. Her Submission to the Royal Commission on the bush fires is a well researched and informative document

Our readers of the Latrobe Valley Naturalist will know that the publication continues to be a valuable resource to our members and I would like to thank Gill for her valuable contribution to the preparation of this magazine. Readers may also have noticed the inclusion of photographs and we are grateful to Ken who has been the major contributor. I would encourage all members to supplement their contributions to the magazine with photographs.

Finally I would like to thank the committee members who renominated for their positions in the Club. We welcomed both Kens – Ken Smith and Ken Harris to our committee and they have been regular attendees this year. We are also grateful that Ken Smith has accepted the role of Assistant Secretary and Ken Harris the position of Vice President Number 3. As previously mentioned Ken Harris has also been a regular and innovative contributor to the Latrobe Valley Naturalist. Thank you to all the committee for their contribution to the Club. We now have good depth in our committee but remind the Club that the position of the Club's archivist remains vacant

David Stickney

## PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

As part of the celebrations for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary next year, the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists Club is holding a natural history photographic competition.

Entries for the competition will not be accepted until 1st January 2010, but we are announcing it now, to encourage members to start thinking of the photos they take as

possible competition entries and to start looking back at your existing photos for those extra special shots.

We want to showcase the work of the many photographers in the club and put together a very special display of photographs.

Entries will only be accepted from current members of the LVFNC and all pictures must be taken in Australia, its territories or the surrounding oceans.

We are offering 10 sections and entrants may submit up to 2 pictures in each of the 10 sections, making a maximum of 20 pictures per entrant.

The 10 sections are designated as:

- i Trees
- ii Flowering Shrubs
- iii Wildflowers (non-shrubby plants)
- iv Orchids
- v Ferns, Mosses and Liverworts
- vi Fungi (including Lichens and Slime Moulds)
- vii Birds
- viii Mammals, Reptiles and Amphibians
- ix Insects Spiders and other invertebrates
- x Landscapes and natural formations, including fire effects

We are not in a position to offer any prizes, but certificates will be awarded to the winners in each section and one picture will be selected as the overall winner.

## Timetable:

Nov/Dec 2009	Issue of Entry Forms
1 January 2010	Start of entry period
30 June 2010	Entries close
Sat 11 Sept 2010	Judging
Sat 11 Sept 2010	Presentation of awards
12th-22 Sept 2010	Display in Traralgon
15th-18 Oct 20	Display at SEANA Camp

We have many photographers in the Club and we look forward to seeing many beautiful photographs, so make a start at picking the best of your pictures and give some thought to those special pictures that you might take before the competition starts in January.

Pictures will be submitted as prints and any size from 4" x 6" up to A4 8" x 12" will be accepted. We are also asking where possible

for equivalent digital images to help us in putting together a show of the images.

Don't start sending any pictures yet, that doesn't happen until January 1<sup>st</sup>, but do start looking through your existing pictures and thinking about the beautiful images you may take before the competition gets started.

Ken Harris

## MOTH TRAPPING AT MORWELL NP - APRIL EXCURSION

Jackie and I decided we must be mad to drive all the way to Morwell NP to spend an evening outside in the rain looking at moths. But this is what field naturalists do, and the moths certainly didn't mind the rain.

Peter Marriott, our guest speaker from the night before, hung a white sheet under the eaves of the picnic shelter in the Kerry Road picnic area, suspended a bright light globe beside it and as darkness fell the moths flew in to settle on the sheet. Fortunately the predicted rain held off while we had our barbeque tea in the open, but soon after dark it came down and continued steadily for the rest of the evening. It was probably just as well there were only 13 members on this excursion, as that was about how many could fit in the shelter and be able to move around to see the moths on the sheet.

Now the hard part is to try and describe what we saw, as there was only one moth from Peter's book 'Moths of Victoria' Part 1 - Silk Moths and Allies- BOMBYCOIDEA. All the others will appear in the volumes yet to be printed, so I will have to rely on my scribbled notes for descriptions and identifications.

The most impressive moths were the Rain Moths, *Oxycanus dirempta* sp. which Peter assured us would come if it rained. I had often seen these at my windows at home on wet winter nights, and like many others had thought they were Bogong Moths. They are large and velvety brown and do a lot of flapping around. The males were large at around 5 cm.

A Bogong Moth *Agrotis infusa* did appear later, and it is also brown, but only a couple of centimeters long. These moths live 5 - 6 months. They breed in NSW on the black

soil plains, then oostevate in the hot weather on mountain tops, where the Aboriginal people would congregate to feast on them.

A very pretty yellow/orange/browny moth was the Fucata Gum Moth *Plesanemema fucata* with the colours of a fallen gum leaf. About 2 cm long it had a thinner body than the Bogong moth, and it rested with its wings in a tent shape. This resting shape is one of the distinguishing features of different groups and is helpful in identification. For instance Geometrids rest with their wings out, either tent shaped or flat. Most I saw seemed to rest with this tent shape, but some were quite flat and triangular, and one I saw at the start of the evening held its wings up like a butterfly. Looking closely at the moths under the bright light made me realise how beautiful they are, with intricate patterns and coloured designs on their wings. *Stiboroma melanosoma* was only grey and white, but the patterns on its wings were exquisite.

*Palaeosia* sp 1, was a small skinny cream/brown moth which rested with folded wings, having a linear rather than triangular shape.

We saw both the male and female Ghost moth *Trictena atriapalpis*. The male was about 5 cm long and black with silver streaks. Some females which arrived later were enormous. They were at least 10 cm long and very bulky. They hung onto the sheet with a front leg stretched above them to hook into the sheet to support their weight. They are essentially egg laying machines, and only last a day. When they emerge from the ground the males are already waiting to mate with them, then they fly around spraying about 40,000 pin-head sized eggs onto the ground. These hatch into tiny caterpillars, and if not preyed upon, go underground where they feed on tree roots.

*Abantiades latipennis*, another Ghost Moth was brown with some white stripes. *Halone sejuncta* was about ½ cm and cream and brown. A *Paraterpna harrisoni* was grey and white, but had a very pretty shape with toothed wing bottoms. *Epicoma melanotoxa* looked very striking, being white with black spots and stripes, and a big red spot on its head. There were multitudes of tiny moths

which I didn't even look at closely. I really only concentrated on the wing shapes and colours, but there was a lot of variation in their antennae some being quite large and diaphanous. The only moth from Book 1 to appear was *Anthela acuta* – and if you want to know what that looks like you'll have to buy Peter's book.

We went home around 8.30, but Peter, Ken Harris and Morwell NP ranger Rob Howell stayed until 10 pm and recorded over 50 species.

Thanks to Peter, this excursion opened a little window for me into the vast diversity and complexity of moths.

Wendy Savage

## **REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 22.6.2009**

### **General Meetings & Excursions**

**Friday 24 July:** Southern Ark Project – Andy Murray

**Saturday 25 July:** Mt Worth SP. Meet 10am at Moonlight Creek carpark. Alix will invite Friends group.

**Friday 28 August:** Wader Conservation in Delaware Bay USA – Susan Taylor

**Saturday 29 August:** Sale Wetlands. Meet 9.15am carpark at corner of Princes Hwy and Whittakers Rd Traralgon (Mexican Restaurant) for car pool, or 10am at Lake Guthridge, Sale.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 1 August 10am at Glen Nayook for Ferns and Mosses Field Trip. Contact: Jackie Tims ☎ 5634 2628.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 4 August Maryvale Mill Settlement ponds. Arrive by 9.15 and park in the first part of the carpark. Walk down to main gate building for induction. Please let Alix know beforehand if coming. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$3146.71. Investment A/c \$12,218.15

### **Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence**

Gavin Dinsdale will modify the website if he gets a copy of the original program.

Archivist – this position is unfilled.

Phil is still researching speaker systems.

Announce prior to AGM that representatives on committees are required to prepare a report.

Photo competition – Ken presented minutes of June 4 meeting. The photos will be on display at the Traralgon & District Art Society gallery (old T'gon Rly Station) from 11-23 September 2010. Continued updates will be published in the Naturalist (see p2).

Cheque for \$1200 has been sent to Uralla Nature Reserve for interpretive signage.

Rosemary Tate from the CWA contacted the Club with the aim of getting a guest speaker to talk to them. Will contact the Club when they finalize what they want.

Jim Blucher is exhibiting a life-size cormorant in an Australian Wildlife Art exhibition in July – see June Naturalist for details.

John Arkinstall requested support for the renovation of the Jeeralang North Hall after the fires.

Petra Szabo is looking for support to monitor nesting boxes.

Celine Foenander interviewed David Mules on Gippsland radio about the Club and its activities.

### **Conservation Matters**

Phil reported that environmental groups protested their concerns that areas being logged at College Creek in the Strzeleckis will not be properly regenerated.

Susie Zent and Friends of the Gippsland Bush are lobbying the Government to ensure that the one-off harvest of 1500ha does not become a long term harvest. Phil will continue to liaise with the environmental groups.

### **GUEST SPEAKER FOR AUGUST**

**Susan Taylor** is the Senior Flora and Fauna Officer at the Department of Sustainability and Environment based at Yarram. Each year since 2002 she has travelled to Delaware Bay on the east coast of USA to work as a volunteer bird bander. She has been involved in the project to study the spectacular declines of Red Knot observed during the 1990s. Her talk will demonstrate how population monitoring can help bird conservation.



## TRAFALGAR WATER TRUST MAY 2009

Our Excursion in May was a visit to the Trafalgar Water Trust which surrounds a deep gully adjacent to Sunny Creek near Trafalgar.

This reserve has had a chequered career. Back in 1988 it was about to be cleared and the Blackwoods and Mountain Ash were to be harvested before planting as a Eucalypt plantation. Public objections finally resulted in the area being preserved, and additional moves have now secured its future.

We were met at the reserve by Lynley Keene from Gippsland Water who gave us a run down on the future plans for the reserve. Gippsland Water have taken it on as an environmental offset, and will be managing it for a ten year period and will be putting a covenant on it which will ensure its long-term preservation even if there should be a future change of ownership.

It has been partly fenced to exclude stock, and cleared areas will be revegetated in the near future.

In addition to flora surveys back in 1988, consultants have carried out fauna and flora surveys. There is a programme in progress for the elimination of feral animals (goats, pigs, deer, foxes and rabbits) and weed control measures are being taken.

While we were talking to Lynley, some of the local birds put on a display for us. Two Wedge-tailed Eagles overflew the site, passing quite close overhead, while a Brown Goshawk also flew past.

Before starting our exploration of the site, we were witness to the release of an adult wombat that had been cared for by the local wildlife shelter. The wombat was (after we had all had a good look at him) placed inside the entrance to a nearby wombat burrow.

The reserve contains one very special plant, the Filmy Maidenhair – *Adiantum diaphanum*, which grows under the spray of a waterfall in the steep gully. Preserving this will form part of the protection afforded to the reserve, but we did not get to see it today. The waterfall has currently dried up and the fern is not visible at present.

The gully is dominated by Blackwood trees some of a considerable size. At first when we overlooked the gully there were no eucalypts visible, but in the deepest part large Mountain Ash trees tower over the blackwoods. Descending into the gully the dominant undershrub seemed to be the Austral Mulberry – *Hedycarya angustifolia*, which was numerous on the descent.

Near the top of the descent, we found some very special plants. They were obviously passion-vines, so many thought they were the Banana Passion-vine, which is quite common as an escape in the bush. My first reaction however was that they were the native Red Passion-vine – *Passiflora cinnabarina*. We couldn't resolve it on site, but I took a small piece home and checked it against the Flora of Victoria. The banana passion-vine has velvety hairs on the underside of its leaves and on the stems. The leaves and stems of our plant were completely glabrous, confirming it as the Red Passion-vine.

This plant is quite widespread in East Gippsland, and has a few known localities further west, including being known to grow in Mt. Worth State Park, not far from this site. The flora suggests that these locations may be introductions, but it is nevertheless a very special plant and a great addition to the flora of the reserve.

Ferns were a significant component of the flora. We found many Rough Tree-ferns – *Cyathea australis*, on the steep slopes and the Soft Tree-fern – *Dicksonia antarctica* was common along the creek at the bottom. We found three water-ferns (*Blechnum* species) with the Mother-shield Fern – *Polystichum proliferum* and the Shiny Shield-fern – *Lastreopsis acuminata*. Another Shield-fern seemed a little different from *L. acuminata*, but we were unable to determine the species.

On the ascent, as well as lots of bracken, we found the Batwing Fern – *Histiopteris incisa* and back at the top, the Common Ground-fern – *Calochlaena dubia*.

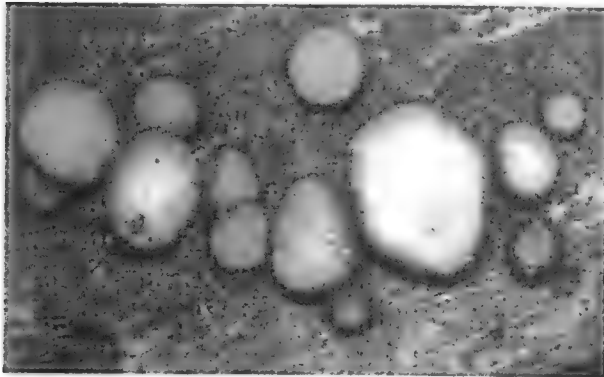
One more interesting plant not previously recorded in the reserve was found along the creek at the bottom of the gully. This was clearly a member of the Cabbage family, and



had ripe seed pods on it. I was subsequently able to identify it as the Forest Bitter-cress – *Rorippa gigantea*. This is an annual native plant, found scattered through wet forests.



The site is still pretty dry, but quite a number of fungi were found, including the beautiful little Blue Pixie Parasol – *Mycena interrupta*. Near to this was another beautiful little fungus, the Eyelash Pixie Cup



– *Scutellinia scutellata*. These were a mass of slightly hollowed discs in yellow and brown, with a fringe of minute black hairs around each cup (the eyelash). Two other *Mycena* species were also plentiful in the gully.

I can provide a complete list of the flora that we found during our excursion, together with a list of a few fungi that I was able to identify.

Ken Harris

## THE VARIED MOODS OF PINK LAKES

Your editor recently spent a few days walking in the Pink Lakes area of the Mallee-Sunset NP, Victoria's second largest park. The lakes appear as pink in some lights because of the red pigment beta carotene secreted by the salt-tolerant alga *Dunaliella salina*. We can't reproduce the dramatic colour within the constraints of this magazine, but one of the intriguing things was the variation in the winter light on the lakes themselves...



## SEANA SPRING CAMP

2-4 October Grampians/Gariwerd, hosted by Hamilton FNC

Information available from Assistant Secretary Ken Smith

## OUR CLUB SPRING CAMP

9-11 October Avon/Mt Hedrick area, staying at Camp Munjara, Glenmaggie

Details later

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

### DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: savage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

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Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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**LATROBE VALLEY NATURALIST**

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SURFACE  
MAIL

AUGUST 2009

Issue No. 524



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



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# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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## LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

- Meeting: Friday 28 August      Wader Conservation in Delaware Bay USA – Susan Taylor
- Excursion: Saturday 29 August      Sale Wetlands. Meet 9.15am carpark at corner Princes Hwy & Whittakers Rd, Traralgon (Mexican Rest.) for car-pooling, or 10am at Lake Guthridge, Sale.
- Bird Group:      Tuesday 1 September to Narracan. Meet by 9.30 Narracan Hall (see BM Notes p5). TRU Wetlands survey 17 Sept. Meet by 9.30 Morwell Bridge gate. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au
- Botany Group:      Saturday 5 September – Field trip with Springsure Hill Landcare Group. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246
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- Meeting: Friday 25 September      Plants & Pollinators – Cathy Powers
- Excursion: Saturday 26 September      Bunyip SP. Details later.
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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Dennis Nagle ☎ 5127 1525

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK  
Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE  
Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE  
Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (SEPTEMBER): 11 SEPTEMBER 2009**

**LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>**

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## BAPTISM OF FIRE

7th February 2009 has come to be known as Black Saturday in Australia. On that day, fire ravaged the state of Victoria. Several major fires started or intensified on that day, much property was destroyed and around 200 people lost their lives.

One fire that started on that day was in Wilsons Promontory National Park. This fire was apparently started by a lightning strike in the Cathedral Range in the fairly inaccessible East coast of the Prom. All available fire-fighting resources were concentrated on the other major fires, which all threatened towns and houses. Efforts to fight the fire on the Prom were limited to attempting to insure that the fire did not escape from the Park towards the township of Yanakie and later to successfully prevent it from reaching the settlement of Tidal River inside the Park. Otherwise the fire was left to burn, and it did. The fire was still burning on 7th March, a whole month after it started.

The fire started in the Cathedral Range on the East coast. At first it burned steadily north, but a change of wind direction, caused the fire to also turn to the west. It continued its northwards progress while at the same time spreading right across the peninsula as far as the main road to Tidal River. At this point the threat of the fire spreading outside the Park, North towards Yanakie, was quite high, but a second change of wind direction turned the fire to the South and over the next few days it moved steadily towards Tidal River. Firefighters were able to backburn a protective fire break and succeeded in preventing the fire from reaching Tidal River and over 1 month after it started, the fire was finally under control and then came to an end.

I am part of a group of amateur botanists who are helping Parks Victoria to monitor the long term effects of fire in the park. We visit the park once a month and perform detailed plant surveys on plots set out in the areas burned by previous fires. We had such a survey planned for 2nd April (the two previous surveys had been cancelled because of the fire).

We had a very limited survey programmed and during the morning, we were given a chance to see the effect of the fire. We were driven the length of 5 Mile Road right to 5 Mile Beach on the East coast of the promontory (where we had our morning tea), before retuning and driving to Tidal River to survey some plots in the afternoon.

It was clear that the fire had not been a particularly hot one (unlike other fires further North) and that the damage done by the fire was not very severe. In places the fire had not even killed the tree canopy although the under shrubbery and ground plants were thoroughly burned.

When we stopped first at the start of 5 Mile Road, I took a quick look in the bush alongside the Car Park. It had been thoroughly burned, but already there were strong signs of recovery. I immediately noticed that the trees, which were mostly



Brown Stringybark - *Eucalyptus baxteri*, were already putting out fresh shoots. Eucalyptus trees have a special adaptation to fire in that they have dormant buds just under the bark and when the crown of the tree is defoliated, these epicormic buds are stimulated to grow

and clusters of epicormic shoots appear all over the trunk and main branches of the trees.

Looking down at the blackened earth, it was already covered in new shoots of the Austral Bracken - *Pteridium esculentum*. Austral Bracken is often thought of as an introduced weed, but is actually a common native plant in Australia. March is not normally a period of growth for bracken or for any other ferns, but thousands of these plants were putting on vigorous new growth to enable them to recover from the fire.

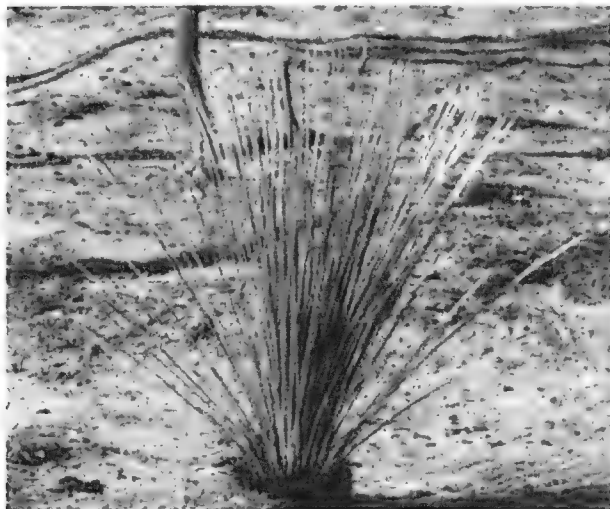
Looking more closely among the bracken fronds I saw that seedlings were already

emerging from the soil. First I noticed seedlings of the Brown Stringybark. Eucalyptus trees usually carry ripe seed in their woody capsules (gum nuts) and after the fire these would have opened and spread the seed on the bare earth. Then I noticed that there were also some wattle (Acacia) seedlings emerging.



Exploring the area I found only one Acacia species, the Sallow Wattle - *Acacia longifolia*, so that is almost certainly the identity of the seedlings.

Acacias use a different system to Eucalypts to regenerate after fire. Acacias shed their seeds every year, but the seeds have a very hard, usually black, outer layer and this can preserve the seed in the soil for as long as 50 years. When a fire burns above the seeds, the hard outer coat is cracked by the heat of the fire and when the first rain comes the water is able to penetrate and germination rapidly follows. The Sallow Wattle is therefore making its own recovery after the fire by starting numerous new plants.



When we started out along 5 Mile Road (which is not 5 miles long, it is 16.7 kms long, it is named for 5 Mile Beach which is at the end of the road) I immediately noticed that some of the best signs of recovery were from the Austral Grass-trees - *Xanthorrhoea australis*. Grass-trees are very plentiful at the Prom especially along 5 Mile Road, although few of them grow the 5 foot tall trunks that are often seen at other sites. It looked as if the grass-trees had been practically defoliated. The outer ends of the grass-like leaves had been burned and what remained was brown and dead-looking, but although out of season for growth, the leaves had grown on and all had 6 to 9 inches of green now showing, with the brown remains on their tips. Where we had a view over the plains, we could see that instead of an all black scene, great patches of the landscape were already quite green and most of this greenery was the regrowth of thousands of grass-trees.

In an area of short heath by the roadside many of the smaller plants had escaped the fire and some such as the Cranberry Heath - *Astroloma humifusum* were even in flower.

We next came to a moister area where wet sclerophyll shrubs and trees had grown close together. This area also contained a number of fern species, and although again a long way outside their normal season for growth all the ferns were showing fresh green fronds growing above the blackened forest floor.

The first ferns I noticed were Fishbone Water-ferns - *Blechnum nudum*. These are ground ferns of damp sites and where they grew, the fire had left just blackened earth. Out of the black earth however there were numerous clusters of fresh fronds of the Fishbone Water-fern.



On the other side of the road were several Rough Tree-ferns - *Cyathea australis*. Some tree ferns had been completely defoliated while others had their fronds reduced to mainly bare stalks. In among the dead fronds once again we saw fresh new fronds growing some of them already almost a metre in length.



A little further on was a low swampy area and this had been densely covered with Austral King Ferns - *Todea barbara*. This area was an amazing sight. The King Ferns must be very old specimens. King Ferns develop a trunk which can reach 1.5 metres. It develops very slowly and is

thickly coated with black fibrous material. These plants had trunks about 1 metre tall and they looked like black steep-sided mounds of earth. There were no visible remnants of the 2 metre fronds that would have been there before the fire, but out of the top of each mound (trunk) were several clusters of fresh new fronds, a splash of bright green among all the blackened remnants.

Among the King Ferns there were also remnants of a sedge, *Gahnia clarkei*, known as the Tall Saw-sedge. This sedge has leaves with a sharp saw-toothed edge that grows to two metres and flowering stems reaching up to 5 metres or more. The sedge had also been burned to the ground, but among the twisted stems on the ground were fresh green shoots emerging from the sides of the stems.

Moving on a little we visited one of the plots that we had surveyed in September last year. The fire had burned right across our plot, but there were already signs of recovery with sedges and the Spiny-headed Mat-rush - *Lomandra longifolia* already showing fresh leaves. While on this plot, I also saw a

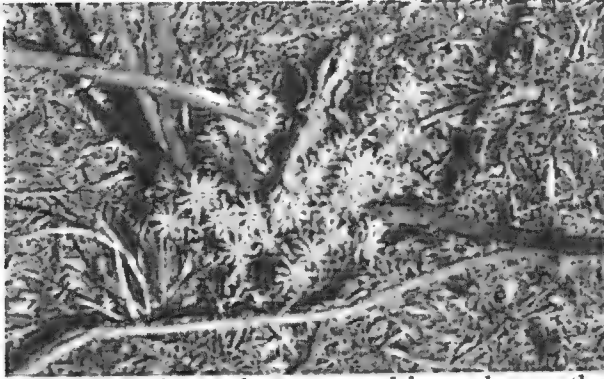
Southern Water Skink - *Eulamprus tympanum*, which when disturbed hurried into a hole in the ground. This is a largish lizard, the one I saw was nearly 30cm long and it was good to see that it had also survived the fire (probably by going underground).

As we returned to the road, we discovered a small shrub that had probably been killed by the fire, a Horny Cone-bush - *Isopogon ceratophyllus*. The plant was probably dead, but we could see that the seed cones had opened and fresh seeds were emerging, waiting for a breath of wind to disperse them.



Moving on further we saw several shrubs of the Bushy Needlewood - *Hakea decurrens*, which had all been killed by the fire. Hakeas have thick woody capsules each protecting two winged seeds and on all these plants the capsules were wide open and the seed dispersed to start growing with the first rain. The shrubs were black, but the insides of the opened capsules, were almost yellow and chestnut, seeming almost like bright flowers among all the charcoal.

Reaching the end of the road, we encountered a transition zone between the fire and an unburned strip along the coast. Here there were several shrubs which had been burned or at least all foliage was killed, but there were many examples of recovery. Some shrubs showed new shoots emerging from the stems among the dead foliage. Two examples were the Coastal Beard-heath - *Leucopogon parviflorus* and the Swamp She-oak - *Allocasuarina paludosa*.



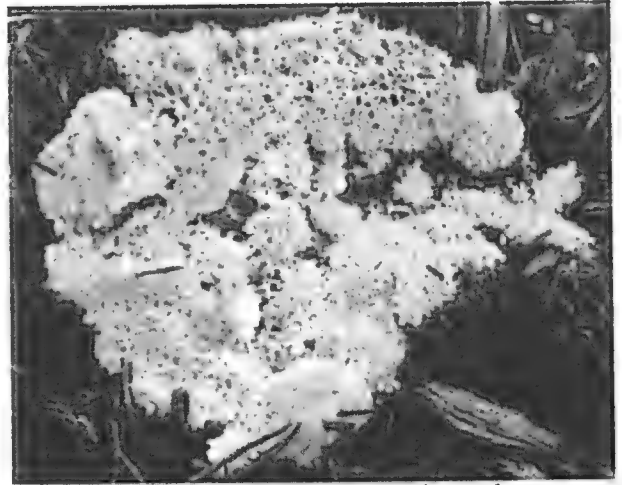
Other shrubs, when everything above the ground is killed by the fire, recover by means of crown epicormics. These consist of dormant buds surrounding the main stems below the surface of the soil. When the fire is over these buds burst into life and a cluster of new shoots appear around the base of the burnt stems.

Some plants are seemingly destroyed by the fire, with nothing visible above the surface, but still a fresh shoot may emerge from the soil and is clearly too strong to be a seedling and must be emerging from a rootstock which has survived the fire, despite the loss of all previous stems. One example we saw was a Handsome Flat-pea - *Platylobium formosum*.



We walked the last few hundred yards to 5-Mile beach where we had our morning tea break. It was a beautiful sunny day and we had 5 miles of clear beach before us and not another person in sight apart from our party. It seemed almost sacrilege to leave footprints behind on that pristine sand.

As we walked back to the cars, we visited a ruin of an old hut whose presence had been unknown before the fire. In this area another unusual form of life was discovered. A bright patch of yellow on the blackened earth proved to be a Slime Mould.



This one proved to go by the very descriptive but hardly elegant name of the Dog Vomit Slime Mould - *Fuligo septica*. At first sight it did look rather like something a dog had sicked up, but on close examination it had quite an intricate structure and it looked as if it was beginning to form its spore-bearing structures.

We then drove back along 5 Mile road, but we made a couple more stops to examine the vegetation on the return journey.

At our last stop we made one special discovery, which provided a beautiful symbol of the way that nature is repairing the damage done by the fire. Standing alone in a patch of low

burnt heath, stood a single plant of the Butterfly Flag - *Diplarrena*

*moraea*, a beautiful white iris. This plant had put up a strong new green shoot from its surviving rootstock.

Not only the fresh green leaves, but the plant had also put up a single flower spike and a single white iris flower stood clean

among all the remnants of the fire.



Ken Harris



## BIRD DAY AT MARYVALE MILL SETTLING PONDS AREA

Seventeen members of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists Club Bird Group were privileged to recently visit the Maryvale Paper Mill's Settling Ponds area. From Club records, the first such visit was in 1977 and the visit on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2009 was the tenth occasion. In the late 1980s Duck Surveys were undertaken in February. Most other visits being late in the year.

Catherine Reid, an Environment Officer of the Maryvale Mill, arranged the visit, pre-checked the area, ran the induction, and took good care of us on the day. Thank you very much Catherine.

The day was cold and windy following storms. There was a marked absence of Cormorants (saw one Great and one Little Pied Cormorant) and Grebes (none sighted), compared to our previous visit, when the barrages were closely populated with these birds - tell-tale signs remained. This may simply be the time of the year and the amount of water available elsewhere.

We were able to watch and identify a Whistling Kite, a pair of Australian White Ibis, Purple Swamphens, White-faced Honey-eaters and small groups of Superb Fairy-wren and Red-Browed Finches. There were small numbers of Black Swan, Chestnut and Grey Teal, Pacific Black Duck, Australian Wood Duck, a pair of Australian Shelduck and a sizable group of Eurasian Coot.

A highlight was a long, close-up look at a male Scarlet Robin who kept flitting around feeding despite the audience. In total, we recorded 34 species. The bush on either side of the pond, the pond itself and swamp area provide diverse habitats so the range of bird types was high. One of the top birding sites in the Latrobe Region.

Alix Williams

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 20.7.2009

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 28 August:** Wader Conservation in Delaware Bay USA – Susan Taylor

**Saturday 29 August:** Sale Wetlands. Meet 9.15 carpark at corner of Princes Hwy and Whittakers Rd Traralgon (Mexican Restaurant) for car pool, or 10am at Lake Guthridge, Sale.

**Friday 25 September:** Plants and Pollinators – Cathy Powers

**Saturday 26 September:** Bunyip SP.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 5 September Springsure Hill Landcare Group Field Trip. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 1 September Yarragon South/Narracan. Meet by 9.30 at Narracan Hall (from Newborough exit turn south and follow the Thorpdale road for 11 km to Narracan, then turn right over the creek. Hall is about the 2<sup>nd</sup> building on the right). Thursday 17 September TRU Wetlands and Bush Block survey – meet by 9.30am at Morwell Bridge gate. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Not available as Treasurer still away.

## Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence

Archivist – this position is unfilled.

Public address system – Phil has checked with Dick Smith, Maryvale Electronics, Light Works and A&P Electronics. Most suitable system appears to be an Ashton Brand system available from Radio Parts in Melbourne (cost around \$500). Motion: Subject to suitability Phil is authorized to purchase this. Moved K Harris. Seconded J Tims

Bound copies of Naturalist for last 4 years - Phil to bring in one of the bound volumes for Wendy to show to Peter Lendon, (bookbinder) to match colour and style.

Photo competition information is in the Naturalist.

Phil is still collecting information for club history.

1992 to 2000 bird journals have been returned to the club.

Deins Nagle is conducting a bird survey in the Tyers Park, Wirilda Conservation Park



and surrounding State Forest over 9 days between July 25 and August 2.

Members who have monitoring sheets for Alix's bird project are asked to complete and return them to her.

## Conservation Matters

Nothing to report.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER

**Cathy Powers** became interested in terrestrial orchids in 2003 and since then has photographed over 200 species in Victoria, and over 100 in a six-week period in Western Australia. She is involved in a research project at the You Yangs regional park concerning the 'Brittle Greenhood' which is on the endangered list within Victoria. Cathy is not a botanist or entomologist but has researched what little has been published about orchid pollination, and learned much by observation in the field. Since there is a huge gap in knowledge regarding orchid pollination and interaction with insects, many amateurs such as Cathy are offering their experiences as a basis for data profile. Cathy's education is in nursing, photography of orchids and speaking to community groups is a hobby. Her photographs of orchids and also other flora have been published in various media including US magazine "Grit". Her website is: [www.banjarah.com](http://www.banjarah.com).

## CLUB PHOTO COMPETITION

Don't forget our photographic competition – entries accepted from 1 January, open to current club members only. There are 10 sections and entrants may submit up to 2 pictures in each. Start snapping now!

For full details see July Naturalist page 2.

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Details next issue or contact Wendy. List for names will be available at GM.

## FABULOUS FOOTPRINTS

(From SGCS August 2009 Newsletter)

A mild winter's day witnessed a band of field naturalists negotiating the Cape Liptrap Coastal Park to scramble down a steep dune on to Morgans Beach at the Ten Mile. They were there to see the footprints set in stone found by Gary Wallis earlier in the year and, with Parks Victoria rangers, to watch staff of Museum Victoria prepare the rock to take moulds in order to cast the prints.

During glacial/interglacial cycles 68-112,000 years ago, sea level was 140 metres lower, the sea's edge at King Island. The continental shelf was a great sand plain with cold dry windy conditions. A huge dune complex built up, with xeric vegetation.

Today on a slab of crumbling stone fallen from the cliff, its lower edge washed by the high tide, are prints of the fauna from this period.

At least 68,000 years old, they are in danger of being eroded. On the slab are:

- Wombat-like indents with claw marks
- An emu print
- A row of tiny hopping prints.

Nearby are two sets of rocks with diprotodon footprints.

Owing to a great water event 23,000 years ago, water coursed through the dunes, dissolving the lime to leave a contortion of limestone flutes.

Cliffs today are towering turrets composed of calcareous aeolianites, fragile and friable, Cushionbush scrambling for a tenacious foothold up the steep inclines. Contorted and striated, these cliffs form a vast backdrop to tumbled scree. Nearby is a wind flume, sand trickling down, only to be blown upwards again by the strong wind.

The Cape Liptrap peninsular beaches continue to surprise.

Terri Allen

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

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Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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SEPTEMBER 2009

Issue No. 525



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Meeting: Friday 25 September      Plants & Pollinators – Cathy Powers  
Excursion: Saturday 26 September      Bunyip SP. Meet 10am on Tynong North Rd where it  
turns north off Princes Hwy.  
Bird Group:      Tuesday 6 October to Moe Treatment Works. Contact:  
Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au).  
See BM Notes p6 for full details.  
Botany Group:      Saturday 3 October – Boolarra Bushland Reserve.  
Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 23 October      Holey Plains Flora & Fauna – Ken Harris  
Excursion: Saturday 24 October      Holey Plains SP. Meet **9.45am** sharp, Rosedale carpark  
and toilets on Princes Hwy opposite the bakery.

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (OCTOBER): 9 OCTOBER 2009**

**LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>**



## FUNGI AND BIRDS IN MORWELL NATIONAL PARK

The start of June saw a double assault on Morwell National Park by club members. On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May the botany group visited Fosters Gully to look for fungi. Then on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June the birding group explored along Billys Creek looking for birds.

The weather was kind to both groups. Fungi hunting is slow work and we made almost record-breakingly slow progress, taking 2½ hours to reach Lyndon's Clearing. We were too hungry to go on round the full track and we returned to the car park, only taking 1 hour for the return journey.

The extended dry weather meant that it was not a good year for fungi, and the large spectacular species were few and far between, but we did nevertheless find a lot of interesting fungi, starting with the Ghost Fungus – *Omphalotus nidiformis*. This is

noted for its luminescence at night, which is unique in our area. At night it gives off a ghostly greenish light.

I photographed this one by its own light back in 2000



(I gave it a 90 minute exposure at maximum aperture). The colour of the original image is a rich green.

As we turned to start along Fosters Gully, it was a Swamp Wallaby that caught everyone's attention. A male wallaby a little way down the track, was watched by everyone as it reached up and grabbed hold of a trailing stem of Forest Clematis. After a couple of unsuccessful attempts, it pulled the stem down, using its mouth and both front legs. Something gave a bit further up, and some stems of the clematis now hung within easy reach of the wallaby, that then proceeded to tuck in, obviously relishing

eating the clematis leaves. This picture shows him with a mouthful of clematis.



An interesting fungus was found on the way to Lyndon's Clearing in a spot where it has been seen previously. Several fruiting bodies of the Vegetable Caterpillar – *Cordyceps gunnii* were found in grass by the track growing under *Pomaderris apetala*. This fungus parasitises a caterpillar that feeds on the roots of various trees. It eventually kills the caterpillar (about a foot underground and then pushes its way to the surface, showing its distinctive blackish club-shaped fruiting bodies. The photo above was taken by April Nutter.



Reaching Lyndon's Clearing, we explored down to the creek and here, where it was damper, we found a variety of interesting and attractive fungi.



Very special was the delicate little blue fungus, the Pixie's Parasols – *Mycena interrupta*. We found a large patch of this lovely fungus on a dead log and all our photographers took turns to photograph it. I thought this was a new species for the park, but when I checked my records I found it to be the second time it was found. The picture is another taken by April Nutter.

Although this was not new to the park, we did find several species not previously recorded in Morwell National Park, namely:

*Hypocrea sulphurea*

*Mycena mulawaestrus*

*Macrotypophula juncea* – Fairy Hair

*Xylaria hypoxylon* – Candle Snuff Fungus

*Ryvardenia campyla* – Weeping Polypore

All of these are now illustrated on the Morwell National Park Web Site: [morwellnp.pangaeon.net](http://morwellnp.pangaeon.net)

Three days later I was in another part of the park, exploring Billys Creek with the club's birdwatchers. We had a very enjoyable walk as far as the Billys Creek Weir, but our greatest success came near the start of the walk. First David Mules spotted a Crested Shrike-tit and it became clear that there were 4 or 5 of them, perhaps a family party. It is always good to see these uncommon birds, but David did even better while we were watching the shrike-tits. He located a Red-browed Tree-creeper, a bird previously reported to be in the park, but unconfirmed until then. It was a difficult bird to see as it stayed very high in the upper branches of young Swamp Gums, but eventually we all got to see it. It's tendency to stay high up and its choice of trees was very different from the White-throated Tree-creeper which was also seen in the area.

Many other birds were seen including Golden Whistlers and Lewin Honeyeaters and of course Eastern Yellow Robins.

We returned along the southern boundary of the creek flats at the backs of private property and disturbed a large number of Eastern Grey Kangaroos, who were feeding on private property, but at our approach dashed back into the park for cover. The first mob we saw had at least 45 kangaroos in it and a little further on we disturbed a second mob of about 15 roos, making over 60 kangaroos on the Billys Creek Flats.



Although birds were our focus, several interesting fungi were seen as well. Near the start of the walk we found the Wood

Blewits – *Lepista nuda*. These were growing in a large half ring, centred somewhere on the track leading to discussion of how these toadstool fairy-rings arise. Near the end of our walk we found another very spectacular fungus, which was another new addition to the park list. It was the rich red Sea-star Stinkhorn – *Anthurus archeri*, which smells like rotting flesh and attracts flies to help disperse its spores.

Ken Harris

## BREEDING AND BEHAVIOUR OF SNAKES

Snakes may strike fear into many people but at the same time there also seems to be an overwhelming fascination in them, at least that was evident by the numbers that attended the meeting in February this year.

Sid Cook, a local herpetologist, started with a quick run down on the anatomy of snakes. He said the main difference between snakes and mammals is a snake has a cloaca the same as birds do, they don't have a bladder so they pass all wastes from the one opening.

One of the differences between snakes and lizards is the snake has a soft ligament in the lower jaw, so this enables it to eat larger animals.

Snakes don't see very well, they often might not even see a person walking past them; only the movement gets their attention. They don't have any eyelids so they can't close their eyes, you can't tell if they are asleep or awake.

It is said you should make lots of noise to scare off snakes, but snakes don't have any external ear openings so they virtually cannot hear an air-borne sound. Lizards on the other hand do have external ear openings and lizards have eyelids.

The main thing that distinguishes the snake is its forked tongue. The tongue is used for smelling, it picks up scent particles in the air, brings it back into the throat and the Jacobsen organ determines what scent it is. The snake seems to be able to turn this scent (organ) on and off. If a mouse is put in a cage with a snake, and the mouse sits still, the snake will go straight past it, he won't

even know it's there. On another occasion you put a mouse in there the snake will actively seek it out.

In Australia snakes either bear live young, delivered in a clear membrane as mammals do or they lay a leathery-shelled egg from which the young will break out when fully developed.

Mating mainly occurs in September and October. The young are usually born in January, February or sometimes as late as March. But those born in March don't have long before the onset of winter and may have to go for six or seven months without eating.

Snakes are cold-blooded creatures, which means they won't get any warmer than their surroundings. They cannot generate their own body heat. Some female pythons will generate a little bit of heat; by wrapping themselves around their eggs and sort of shivering, this apparently generates some heat. Pythons will also go out and lie in water then wrap themselves around their eggs to dampen them down, for if the eggshells get too dry the young pythons can't get out.

The number of young born at one time depends on the size of the snake. Sid has heard of a Tiger snake that was supposed to have had eighty-five young in one litter. But, he said the more it has the smaller they are. A litter of twenty-three tiger snakes are usually thinner than a pencil. They are very limited in what they can eat and then you've got everything trying to eat them.

Up in Northern Australia, the Cane Toad has decimated juvenile Death Adders and other smaller types of snakes. But he said they might be developing immunity to them, as there's been an increase in numbers of some species lately or maybe they've just learnt not to eat the Cane Toad. The Cane Toad is a curse on the whole country but they're here now and you're not going to get rid of them in a hurry, he said.

Snakes use their belly scales to move around, if you put them on something really smooth they can still move but not very fast. On solid ground though, you'd think they

had wheels under them, especially when they want to get away.

Snakes also have no sternum, so this allows them to eat something twice to three times the size of their head. They can have around a hundred ribs in the smaller snakes and up to four hundred in larger snakes.

Snakes only feed in the warmer periods. If a snake eats and then the temperature drops quickly down to 3 or 4 degrees over night the snake would probably be dead the next morning, whereas if it only comes down slowly to ten or eleven degrees the snake will usually regurgitate whatever it has swallowed. Otherwise the food will start to go rotten in their stomach.

Temperatures of about 22 degrees to 30 degrees are the preferred range. A snake in a 35-degree plus environment for very long will quickly die, like in a car, even parked in the shade on a very hot day, it will probably be dead within an hour.

In the cold though they won't eat, they become lethargic; cold won't kill them the same way heat will. They can survive temperatures down to 4 degrees for a fortnight. In Europe a bloke over there was actually putting them in a refrigerator. This was for breeding purposes, if you cool the males down; apparently the sperm count is higher than if you don't.

Denis Nagle

To be continued next issue.....

## **BIRD CHALLENGE**

Sat 5 December. Contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

## **SPRING CAMP MT HEDRICK**

Friday 9 to Sunday 11 October, staying at Munjara, Lake Glenmaggie. Cost is \$65 per person for 2 nights. Accommodates 60 with 6 bunks/cabin, so can spread out. Kitchen and dining rooms available for self catering, so bring food for all meals except Saturday evening meal at Heyfield pub. Website [www.munjara.com](http://www.munjara.com). Please put your name on the list and pay Treasurer David.

## **NATIVE FLOWER SHOW**

Oct 17-18 Leongatha Recreation Reserve. Australian Plants Society – South Gippsland Group. Adult entry \$3. Enquiries ☎ 5664 2221

## BOTANY GROUP VISIT TO GLEN NAYOOK RESERVE – AUG 1<sup>st</sup> 2009

The botany group visited the Glen Nayook Reserve near Neerim Junction on 1<sup>st</sup> August. There was a light drizzle all morning, but in the depths of the gully we were almost unaware of the rain.

Glen Nayook is a beautiful fern gully dominated by Mountain Ash – *Eucalyptus regnans* and with a few rainforest trees, with both Myrtle-beech – *Nothofagus cunninghamii* and Southern Sassafras – *Atherosperma moschata* to be found, although we did not get to see any Sassafras.

The reserve was declared way back in 1907. A report on the Latrobe City web site tell us that: “In the not too distant past, Glen Nayook became somewhat forgotten. Walking tracks deteriorated and the reserve was closed. A local group of enthusiastic supporters of the reserve, ‘The Friends of Glen Nayook’, was formed in 2003 to assist Parks Victoria with ongoing maintenance and promotion of the reserve; and subsequently a walking track into the Glen was reopened and upgraded.”

Ferns are a major feature of the gully and we found 18 different species. Descending among Rough Tree-ferns – *Cyathea australis*, the bottom of the gully holds large numbers of Soft Tree-ferns – *Dicksonia antarctica*. The Soft Tree-ferns provide ideal habitat for the epiphytes and growing on them were Kangaroo Fern - *Microsorium pustulatum*, Hen-and-chicken Fern – *Asplenium bulbiferum*, Finger Fern - *Grammitis billardierei* and at least three species of filmy-ferns consisting of the Bristle-fern - *Crepidomanes venosum* in great quantity and both the Austral Filmy-fern – *Hymenophyllum australe* and the Shiny Filmy-fern – *Hymenophyllum flabellifolium*.

Ferns were not the only epiphytes on the soft tree-ferns. One tree-fern had Fieldia – *Fieldia australis* climbing over it, but with none of its creamy tubular flowers (which we had seen a week earlier at Mt. Worth). The other epiphyte was the most exciting plant we found in the park and a great surprise to most of us. Jack Weerts and Marja Bouman who are members of the Friends of Glen Nayook showed us the amazing sight of helmet orchids growing



near the top of tall tree-fern trunks. To most of us helmet-orchids are always hugging the ground. The first plants were not in flower, but we soon found one 8 ft up a tree-fern with a flower fully open, and using

telephoto lens and flash, I managed this picture. We eventually found about 8 tree-ferns bearing helmet orchids and one tree-fern high on a steep bank had a dense colony of plants, which were much more accessible with many in flower and many of us were able to get close-up photographs.

The identity of these plants is interesting.

They were clearly related to the common Veined Helmet-orchid –

*Corybas diemenicus*, but

Ken Smith told us that they were now

considered a different

species. The

obvious difference was

that the boss in the middle of the

flower, which is white

in *diemenicus* was distinctly pinkish in all of these flowers. This newly recognised species has not yet been formally named, but is given in Jeanes and Backhouse's book as the Mountain Helmet-orchid – *Corybas sp. aff. diemenicus* 4. They report it as “growing in mountainous country in moist eucalypt forest on





rich clay-loam soils, occasionally growing on fallen logs and tree fern trunks."

At Glen Nayook we failed to find a single leaf on the ground, although we saw numerous helmet orchid plants on the tree-ferns.

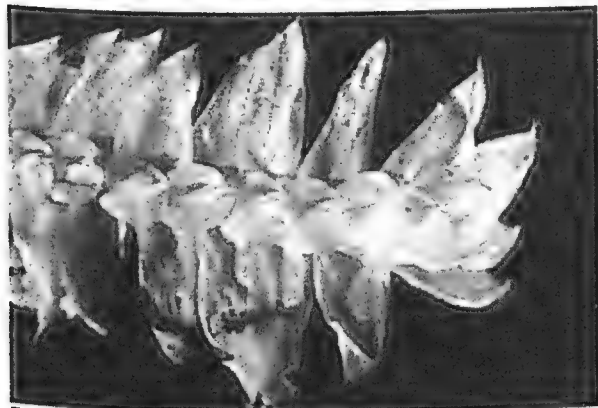
Other ferns were 5 species of Water-ferns, the *Blechnum* species, the Mother Shield-fern – *Polystichum proliferum* which was numerous, the Bat's Wing Fern – *Histiopteris incisa*, the Shiny Shield-fern – *Lastreopsis acuminata* and the Sickie Fern – *Pellaea falcata*.

Mosses and Liverworts were also very common in the gully both on the ground, on fallen branches, on rocks and as epiphytes. Two were particularly noticeable and I made

a real mess of identifying them in the field. The first was this moss, growing commonly on the tree-fern trunks. I made no attempt to identify it, but agreed that it was a liverwort, because of its extra row of leaflets on the underside of each



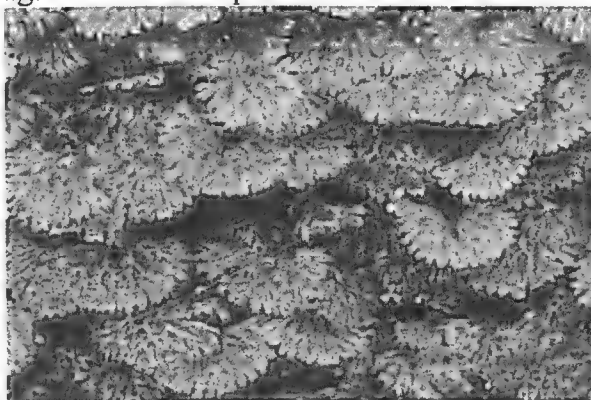
stem. Wrong! There are mosses with an extra row of leaflets and this is one of them.



It is in fact the moss *Cyathophorum bulbosum*, a common and conspicuous moss in fern gullies, growing on tree-fern trunks and branches and looking almost like a fern, its shoots being up to 20 cm long.

The second one I was asked the name of and had to admit to not knowing it; but confidently described it as a moss. Wrong

again! This one proved to be the liverwort



*Hymenophyton flabellatum*, with near circular shoots growing in dense masses on the granite rocks in the gully and giving them a scaly appearance.

It was good to see that weeds were not a big problem in the gully, but we did note three important weeds. Several blackberry plants were noted, but they were mostly small and nowhere were they dominating the bush. I found a bush of the Cherry Laurel – *Prunus laurocerasus* and Jack told us they knew of a few plants of this shrub and were planning to eradicate it. He also told us of another weed, the Himalayan Honeysuckle, sometimes known as Elisha's Tears – *Leycesteria formosa* which the Friends have gone a long way towards eliminating. We did find two small plants of this weed and removed them both.

Looking at all the plants, I did not play much attention to the birds, but a Superb Lyre-bird kept us aware of its presence by singing most of the time we were in the gully. Graeme Rowe also spotted an interesting



slug which was crawling across one of the information boards in the gully. I have since been able to identify it and it is one of only two species of native slugs found in Victoria



and goes by the name of *Cystopelta purpurea* (unless it proves to be the other one *Cystopelta astra*).

There were many other interesting plants including Stinkwood – *Zieria arborescens*, Mountain Correa – *Correa lawrenciana*, Tree Lomatia – *Lomatia fraseri* and a lot of Austral Mulberry – *Hedycarya angustifolia*. I can provide a list of all the species we found amounting to 75 in all.

The rain held off while we ate our lunch after emerging from the gully, but it came in quite heavily as we headed for home.

Ken Harris

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 24.8.2009

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 25 September:** Plants and Pollinators – Cathy Powers

**Saturday 26 September:** Bunyip SP. Meet 10am on Tynong Nth Rd where it turns north off Princes Hwy.

**Friday 23 October:** Holey Plains Flora & Fauna – Ken Harris

**Saturday 24 October:** Holey Plains SP. Meet by 9.45 Rosedale, carpark behind hotel.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 3 October 10am at Boolarra Bushland Reserve – plant survey. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 6 October Moe Treatment Works. Meet by 8.30am DST at the main gate off Old Sale Rd, west of the northern end of Moore St, Moe. Later going to Edward Hunter Reserve. Please contact Alix well in advance if coming. Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw46@netspace.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1598.71. Investment A/c \$12,218.15.

### Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence

Archivist – this position is unfilled.

Public address system – Phil is still investigating further places for purchasing before making a final decision in order to get the best value.

Photo competition information is in the Naturalist. Still need to finalize judges.

Naturalists 2005-8 are at the bookbinders.

Phil is still collecting information for club history.

Australian Naturalists Network – info for 6<sup>th</sup> ANN Get-together 24 August-4 September 2010 Chinchilla, Qld.

Latrobe City Trust – Jean Galbraith Scholarship. They will not seek applicants this year as there were 2 recipients last year.

Spring Camp to Mt Hedrick 9-11 October. Accommodation at Munjara, Lake Glenmaggie, cost \$65/person for 2 nights. Takes 60 with 6 bunks/cabin, so can spread out. Kitchen and dining rooms available for self catering. Saturday evening meal at Heyfield pub. Website [www.munjara.com](http://www.munjara.com). List at GM, and pay Treasurer.

Program planning meeting 16 September 6pm at Lorna's.

SEANA camp 2010 – subcommittee to meet late October. Prepare flyer to distribute at 2009 SEANA camp.

Summer Camp at Omeo – prepare info by October meeting.

Ollerton Reserve committee are applying for a grant for interpretive signage. Latrobe Council is expected to contribute \$3000 which will leave them \$1000 short. Will expect a letter to ask if we will contribute.

Tyers Park bird surveys organized by Denis Nagle at the end of July covered 33 sites with 13 participants including club members. There will be 4/year.

Alan Noy, Indigenous Design has requested club participation in vegetation surveys at TRUenergy CMP blocks and in preparing a TRUenergy calendar featuring flora and fauna. Concern about likely size of project. Would request some reimbursement.

Andrew Isles bookshop has put 'The Nature of Latrobe' on his website for sale.

BADRA (Balook & District Residents Assn) have money from bushfire relief fund and will be organizing events on 3 consecutive Saturdays starting 28 November to bond the community. May ask our assistance.

George Appelby is doing a paper on the Brown Gerygone and contacted Alix through our website, asking for information.

### Conservation Matters

DSE Fire Operations Plan 2009-10 – request for comment. Jackie has written a letter outlining our general view of prescribed burning rather than comment on specific areas to be burnt, as the EVCs of the areas are not given.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: savage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number has changed.

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MAIL**

OCTOBER 2009

Issue No. 526



# *Latrobe Valley* *Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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## LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 23 October

Holey Plains Flora & Fauna – Ken Harris

Excursion: Saturday 24 October

Holey Plains SP. Meet **9.45am sharp**, Rosedale carpark and toilets on Princes Hwy opposite the bakery.

Bird Group:

Tuesday **10 November** (3<sup>rd</sup> is Cup Day) to W12 Tyers Park & Wirilda. Meet by 8.30am. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au).

Botany Group:

Saturday 31 October – Lyrebird walk, Mirboo North. Meet there 10am. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 27 November

Bird Illustration – Nic Day

Excursion: Saturday 28 November

Birds at Mathison Park and Morwell NP. Meet 10am Mackeys Rd carpark, Mathison Park, Churchill.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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## FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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## FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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## SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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## FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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## HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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## FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (NOV/DEC): 13 NOVEMBER 2009**

**LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>**



## WADER CONSERVATION IN DELAWARE BAY USA

28 August 2009. Speaker: Susan Taylor, Senior Flora and Fauna Officer, Department of Sustainability and Environment, based at Yarram. Susan is a member of the Victorian Wader Study Group.

Since 2002 Susan has participated each year, as a volunteer bird-bander, in research into Red Knot conducted by the U S Fish and Wildlife Service. Referring to maps, Susan pointed out Delaware Bay, the estuary of the Delaware River, on the east coast of the USA, and the extensive coastal marshes, and sandy beaches of the bay and the adjacent Atlantic coast. The sandy shoals on the edges of the marshes provide an important final stop-over site for waders on their northward migration to their breeding grounds.

The story of the waders (referred to as shorebirds in USA) of Delaware Bay is intimately linked with the story of the Horseshoe Crab, *Limulus polyphemus*. These normally lurk on the ocean floor, but, each Spring, in response to cycles of the moon and tides, they participate in spectacular mass spawning events. Millions of Horseshoe Crabs come ashore at night, spawning on the beaches. Susan showed photographs of beaches covered in Horseshoe Crabs and the resulting carpets of eggs in the shallows. Adult females come ashore several times per tidal cycle, each laying an estimated 100,000 eggs per season. The eggs provide the shorebirds with the protein- and lipid-rich food they need.

The birds are on a tight time schedule. The Arctic summer is brief and they must arrive in peak condition and in time to pair, mate, lay, incubate and hatch eggs. A rich food supply, enabling them to gain condition quickly at the final stop-over site at Delaware Bay, is necessary to the success of their migratory strategy.

Referring to a photograph of a Red Knot from the American Flyway, *Callidris canutus*, sub-species *rufa*, Susan explained that, world-wide, Red Knot are classified into six sub-species. *C. c. rufa* breeds in Canada and over-winters in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Tierra del Fuego.

By the mid-1990s, a severe decline in numbers of Red Knot in Delaware Bay threatened the extinction of the sub-species within a couple of decades. Numbers had fallen from 100,000 to 150,000 to as low as 17,000. The decline of Red Knot was concurrent with a massive increase in harvesting of Horseshoe Crabs for use as bait in the conch and eel fishing industries which had expanded following the crash of other fishing industries. At the time, the states of Delaware and New Jersey had no legislative power to control the harvesting of crabs. Millions were taken and, as they were sold by weight, the adult females, being the largest, were targeted. Horseshoe Crabs grow slowly taking 9 or 10 years to reach reproductive age.

In 1997 the Fish and Wildlife Service and the state authorities established a research program to determine the population status of Red Knot, its migratory habits and causes of the population decline. The assistance of cannon netting experts from the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand was sought and an international team was established to seek evidence for a causal link between the harvesting of Horseshoe Crabs and the decline in shorebird populations. For one month each Spring, birds are caught, banded, flagged, aged (juvenile or adult), measured and weighed. Susan illustrated the process with photographs. Experience has shown that it is essential to survival and breeding success that Red Knot reach a minimum weight of 180 to 200 grams before departing Delaware Bay for the breeding grounds. Only a tiny proportion of the birds were reaching that weight. The ratio of juvenile birds to adults was very low, indicating poor reproductive success, and the mortality rate of adult birds was high.

Plastic flags on the legs of the birds, colour-coded according to the locality in which the bird was caught and flagged, could be identified with binoculars, providing information without having the bird in the hand. More recently, individual codes on the plastic flags revealed information about the travel history of individual birds. Re-sighting of individuals provides information about survival rates. The use of transmitters glued to the leg flags of the birds allowed

researchers to identify the areas of the bay most important for the birds. This year, data-loggers glued to the leg flags of a few hundred Red Knot, will record the actual migratory pathways of the birds.

Both government and non-government agencies have contributed to the huge recovery effort. The Audubon Society raised funds and lobbied the government. Government agencies have regulated the take of Horseshoe Crabs. At critical times of year, beaches are closed to people and their pets. However, pressures are always there from those proposing activities which threaten the birds.

## **Additional comments arising during question time:**

- This year, for the first time since the research program began, there has been an increase in the number of Horseshoe Crabs and over 90% of the Red Knot caught reached the minimum take-off weight. It looks as if the decline might have halted. It is a long slow process.
- When asked about possible effects of climate change on these birds, Susan suggested: predator populations could change; climate change has resulted in access for humans to the breeding grounds bringing the possibility that development might intrude on breeding areas; during long distance migratory flights the birds rely on the assistance of upper atmospheric wind patterns and these might change.
- During migration the birds fly continuously for three or four days and nights.
- Why breed in the Arctic? The reason is unknown – but this migratory pattern which has evolved over long periods of time is probably related to availability of space and food.
- A number of shorebirds and gulls feed on the eggs at Delaware Bay. The Red Knot are most affected by a shortage of Horseshoe Crab eggs, perhaps because they feed from the

surface, and do not probe or dig for food.

- In “our” East Asian/Australasian flyway, an estimated 80% of the migratory shorebirds rely on the estuaries and shores of the Yellow Sea as their final stop-over site before reaching their breeding grounds. Extensive areas of this habitat are currently being lost as China and South Korea implement massive reclamation projects.

Margaret Rowe

## **BREEDING AND BEHAVIOUR OF SNAKES**

*...Continued from last issue*

There are a lot of fallacies about the poor old snake, Sid said, but without a doubt they are a very dangerous animal. We have in this immediate area of the Latrobe Valley five venomous species; the Eastern Small-eyed snake, which Sid thought one person died from in Queensland about eight years ago. They are not seen here very often, normally they are found under something, they're not very long, jet-black, and have real beady black eyes. We also have the White-lipped snake; it grows to about 500 millimeters. It has a distinctive white line through its top lip, the bite is similar to a bull ant's bite, causing itching. If you find them, they are usually in threes or fours in one area, as they tend to establish a bit of a colony. They are often mistaken for brown snakes. The others we have here are the Tiger snake, the Black snake and the Low-land Copper Head. Sid has never seen a Brown snake in the immediate area. But you do get them around Maffra, Licola, and down at Woodside and probably the other side of Dandenong.

When a report of Brown snake seen around here is made and Sid has gone out to have a look, it usually turns out to be either a Copper head or a White lipped snake but that doesn't mean they are not here. About twenty years ago a bloke came to Sid and said he saw a tiger snake that was short and very fat. Tiger snakes of that size are never very fat. Sid had some Death Adders in at the time and he said have a look at these and the bloke said yep that's what it was.

Another bloke was out looking for scrub worms for fishing, when he turned over a log and found a real fat slow snake. Call it a coincidence but it seems strange that two sightings of death adders not too far apart even in twenty years so it just makes you wonder?

Young snakes when they're born will eat insects, drop tail lizards other snakes what ever they can get down their throats and as quick as they can. The pythons and non-venomous snakes will actually grab their prey, like a mouse, rabbit or whatever, they'll throw coils around it and just squeeze and squeeze. They're not strong enough to crush it, even a fifteen-foot snake wouldn't crush a rabbit, but as the coils get tighter the animal breathes out and when he goes to breathe in he just can't, it will eventually suffocate.

And some of our venomous snakes, like the brown snake in particular, which has the second most potent venom in Australia, and the second most potent in the world of any land snake, will grab a mouse and coil around it like a python and hold it till it dies. It may have strong venom but it's only got really small fangs, and it doesn't put out large quantities of venom. That as opposed to the Taipan will kill a full-grown rat in three seconds. If a Tiger snake bites a rat it will fit, jump up in circles and carry on for some time before it dies.

Venom has quite a few different properties, some still not fully understood but there are toxins that destroy the muscular skeletal system, others that will congeal blood, in the inter-vascular veins. And some have hemophilic properties that cause bleeding and there are also neuro-toxins that affect the nerves. The most dangerous snake locally without a doubt is the Tiger snake.

An argument rages whether snake are aggressive, Sid believes that in 99.9% of cases they are not. Some people have said a snake has chased them or they did this or that. But if you see a snake and you go slowly away from it or slowly past it, the snake won't bother you. They can't hear you and they don't want to waste venom on a person, it's a different story if someone is trying to put a shovel over their head or pick

them up, they are very very reluctant to bite something they can't eat.

Snakes are remarkable animals and widely misunderstood. Many people still believe that 'the only good snake is a dead snake'. Sid recently went to the Outback and nearly all the farmers he came across would shoot or run over every snake they'd see. But if they only realised that snakes do an important job keeping mice and rat numbers down then they might leave them alone.

Over the years Sid had collect an assortment of old antivenene kits. He thought the tiger snake antivenene was developed in 1958 and Taipan in 1960, before that if you were bitten by one of these snakes you would probably have died, (if the snake put venom in you that is).

Symptoms will vary from person to person; some may not show any for six or seven hours. But in some people it can be within two minutes of the bite. Normally, headache, nausea, double vision and feeling not very well at all are common signs of being envenomated.

One antivenene kit Sid opened was registered in Victoria on the 10<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 1891. Labelled, "Dr Muller's Antidote for Snakebite with Hypodermic Syringe and Directions for Use." In it was a little bottle labelled Solution of Strychnine. The directions read to inject around the bite site until the person gets jerky movements then you know it's fighting the venom. If you didn't die from the snakebite the antivenene would probably kill you.

Then for the moment that the audience had been waiting for, Sid brought a couple of live snakes along to show. First was a White Lipped Snake, then a Copperhead, their colour can range from light brown to jet-black, but all have the distinctive brick red tinge down the side. Because of its wide colour variations, they are often mistaken for a Brown or Black snake. Next a Red Bellied Black snake, followed by a Tiger snake and finally one that you could touch, a Python. Sid then answered many questions and dispelled a few more myths, before the night was over.

Denis Nagle

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 21.9.2009

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 23 October:** Holey Plains Flora & Fauna – Ken Harris

**Saturday 24 October:** Holey Plains SP. Meet by 9.45 Rosedale, carpark behind hotel (opposite the bakery).

**Friday 27 November:** Bird Illustration – Nic Day (Bring Simpson & Day Field Guide to meeting)

**Saturday 28 November:** Birds at Mathison Park & Morwell NP. Meet 10am Mackeys Rd carpark Mathison Park, Churchill.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 31 October Lyrebird Walk. Meet there 10am. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 10 November (3<sup>rd</sup> is Cup Day) W12 Tyers Park & Wirilda. 19 November TRU Wetlands & Bush Block survey. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$2218.21. Investment A/c \$12,285.78.

### Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence

Archivist – this position is still unfilled.

Public address system – Phil has extensively researched option. Motion: We purchase a DJ Tech Pro 50W mini PA system with transmitter, lapel mic and receiver for \$494. P Rayment/J Tims. Motion carried.

Naturalists 2005-8 have been bound at a cost of \$65.

Program planning – outline for 2010 program prepared.

SEANA camp 2010 – subcommittee to meet Thurs 5 November 2pm at Wendy's. Flyer has been prepared to distribute at 2009 SEANA camp.

Summer Camp at Omeo – Wendy and Ken will visit area to plan excursions during October.

Ollerton Reserve interpretive signage – no request for assistance received yet.

Alan Noy, Indigenous Design request for club participation in vegetation surveys – nothing further.

BADRA (Balook & District Residents Assn) request for assistance – heard nothing further.

FOBB AGM Thurs 22 Oct 7.30pm, Guest Speaker Dr Greg Hollis on the Baw Baw Frog recovery program.

Spring Camp to Mt Hedrick 9-11 October – handout available at GM.

### Conservation Matters

Nothing to report.

### GUEST SPEAKER FOR NOVEMBER

Artist/Bird Illustrator **Nicolas Day** will speak on "The Logistics of, and Procedure in, Creating a Field Guide for Birds." Included will be many of his anecdotes on travel and observations on wildlife. Nic began his working life with a three year stint as a zookeeper at the Melbourne Zoo. Although not formally trained in art he developed his talent when he joined the Wildlife Art Society in 1975. His first commission was illustrating interpretive signs at the Zoo. He has since had many commissions and has held exhibitions of his art. In 1982 he began his collaboration with Ken Simpson by illustrating the "Field Guide to the Birds of Australia". He is currently working on its eighth edition.

*Would attendees please remember to bring along a copy of the Simpson and Day Field Guide.*

### FOR THE DIARY

**Bird Challenge** is Saturday 5 December. Everyone welcome to join in this fun day. Contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Photo Competition** is happening next year – check full details page 2 July Naturalist.

**Club Summer Camp** at Omeo – 22-25 January 2010. Full details next month.

**Christmas Party** Saturday 12 December, 12 noon, Ken and Fay Harris', Churchill. Full details next month.

## PRE FOSSIL BONES SHED LIGHT ON MAMMAL DECLINE

I have been intrigued by a deposit of bones in a cave approx. 30m above Stoney Creek, a usually dry tributary of Valencia Creek. The open cave faces west and is about 20m wide and 6m broad, and has been eroded out of the conglomerate rock cliff face.



The very shy but stunningly beautiful *Tyto tenebricosa*. Photo: Rohan Bilney

At the back of the cave there is a secondary cave about 1.5 x 1.5 x 1m high and this contains the deposit of bones.

Rohan Bilney of Deakin University is writing his PHD thesis on the subject of small mammal decline and the ecology of the Sooty Owl. His research has focused on sites Along the Mitchell River, and east thereof, however I was fortunate to have him spend a couple of hours doing a partial excavation of the Stoney Creek site.

The species found included some extinct in this area before European settlement and others not recorded for more than 100 years. The cave's excavation gives us a valuable insight into the loss of diversity in our mammal species, especially after European settlement.

### Bone species record for Stoney Creek cave February 2009:

Name	Current distribution	Diet	Arboreal or Terrestrial
Southern/Tasmanian Bettong	Only in Tasmania	Underground fungi, seeds, fruits, roots, bulbs	Terrestrial
Long nosed Potoroo	Not recorded in area for 100 years	Mostly fungi, also insects, roots, seeds, fruits	Terrestrial
Bush rat	Common today in area	Mostly insects, some fungi and other vegetation	Predominantly Terrestrial
Agile antechinus	Found today in area	Cockroaches, beetles, spiders, occ. Flowers & fruit.	Terrestrial
Sugar Glider	Common today in area	Acacia gum and Eucalypt sap, nectar, pollen, manna, honeydew, beetles moths, spiders, other invertebrates, occ. Small birds and mammals.	Arboreal
Greater Glider	Common today in area	Eucalypt leaves and buds, occ. Mistletoe.	Arboreal
Yellow Bellied Glider	No longer in this area	Nectar, pollen, insects, manna, honeydew, eucalypt sap.	Arboreal
Ringtail Possum	Common in this area	Eucalypt and other leaves, flowers and fruit.	Arboreal
Dusky Antechinus	Found today in area	Small vertebrates, worms, beetles, centipedes, spiders, other invertebrates	Terrestrial
Eastern Pygmy Possum	No longer in area	Pöllen and nectar	Arboreal
Brush-tailed Phascogale	No longer in area	Insects, spiders, centipedes, small vertebrates, nectar from eucalypt flowers.	Arboreal
Feathertail glider	Common today in area	Pollen, nectar, insects, honeydew, manna.	Arboreal



Broad-toothed Rat	None in area	Mostly grasses, some insects, mosses, seeds, fungi	Terrestrial
Smoky mouse	Possibly extinct in area	Seeds, fruit, fungi, arthropods	Terrestrial
Hastings River mouse	Now only found in NSW and QLD	Seed and leaf in Summer, green stem in winter, small amounts of other things.	Terrestrial
Swamp Rat	Found today in area	Mostly grasses, some insects, mosses, seeds, fungi	Terrestrial
Long-nosed Bandicoot		Invertebrates, eggs, fungi, seeds, plant roots	Terrestrial
Eastern Quoll	Common in 1930s, now extinct in area	Small mammals, fruit, seeds and grasses.	Mainly terrestrial, lower arboreal.

These bones also tell us of the enormous amount of forest processing roles these small creatures have, and how their extinction/decline due to disease, fox and cat predation, deforestation, drought and fire, is having such a massive yet unseen impact on this area.

Owls, just like frogs, are indicators of ecology health. It is hopeful that the results of research undertaken by Bilney and others like him can sound out like Sooty Owl's infamous 'bomb-whistle screech' to the people who appear to hold the strings to our future.

John Topp

References:

Cronin, L., *Australian Mammals: Key Guide*, Envirobook, Annandale, NSW, 2000

Menkhorst, P. & Knight, F., *A Field guide to the Mammals of Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001.

## SALE EXCURSION 29.8.09

Excellent views of more than 20 Freckled Ducks on Lake Guyatt were the highlight of the club excursion to Sale. Although not very active they were close enough to the shoreline to be easily observed through binoculars. A pair of Pink-eared Duck, several Black Swans, many Eurasian Coot and a large variety of other waterbirds made for a very interesting walk around the lake. Flying Pelicans as always attracted attention as they sailed so smoothly in for a landing like a flight of flying boats. Darters and Cormorants were much in evidence and a Whistling Kite made several passes over Lake Guyatt during the morning, which incidentally, remained fine and sunny until after lunch despite the heavy overcast and drizzle we had driven through in the Latrobe Valley.

A couple of good sightings were of a Satin Bowerbird and a single Latham's Snipe and there was a number of other bush birds around including Yellow Thornbills, Noisy Miners, Rainbow Lorikeets and Superb Fairywrens. Altogether it was a most profitable and enjoyable morning of birding.

The afternoon walk on Sale Common was far less profitable although it began well with Golden Whistlers and Grey Fantails early on. At the bird hide on top of the old rifle range mound we had excellent views of Welcome Swallows hawking for insects on the flat below us and over the water course. Martins were doing the same about 20 to 50 metres over our heads but were difficult to identify as only their white rumps were visible and the colouring on the head was not easily observed.

However, as rain began to fall, they changed their patrol from high in the air to low over the water and it was immediately apparent that all were Tree Martins. Because we were high on the mound we had the unusual opportunity of looking down on them and it was easy to see that dark, not rusty-red, heads were the rule. We continued some distance further but gradually people turned back to escape the rain and although a few more birds such as Grey Shrike-thrush and Wood Duck were seen the birding was far less interesting than in the morning.

David Mules

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: savage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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NOV-DEC 2009

Issue No. 527



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 27 November

Creating a Field Guide for Birds – Nic Day

Excursion: Saturday 28 November

Birds at Mathison Park and Morwell NP. Meet 10am  
Mackeys Rd carpark, Mathison Park, Churchill.

Bird Group:

**Bird Challenge, Saturday 5 December.** Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au).

Botany Group:

The botanists are wearing their bird challenge hats, so botany is in recess until next year. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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### CHRISTMAS PARTY – SAT 12 DEC, 12 NOON AT KEN HARRIS'S, CHURCHILL

Members' Night 15 January 2010 – open theme. Bring anything of interest for show and tell.

Summer Camp 22-25 January 2010 at Omeo – see page 6 for details.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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### FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

---

FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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### FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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### SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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### FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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### HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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### FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (JAN/FEB): 1 FEBRUARY 2010**

**LVFNC web page:** <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

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## SPRING CAMP – OCT 9-11 2009, CAMP MUNJARA, LAKE GLENMAGGIE

For our 1990 Spring Camp, we stayed at Camp Munjara on the shore of Lake Glenmaggie, where we were very well looked after. This report is mainly a report on the plants and animals we found in the immediate surrounds of the camp, but I have added a couple of notes on special plants that we found during our outings away from the camp.

The flora of the camp surrounds was quite interesting and had many plants not seen in other parts of the Latrobe Valley. I recorded just 27 plant species, but there were several of interest. The dominant tree around the camp site is the Red Box – *Eucalyptus polyanthemos* and these lovely trees with their almost circular leaves (so unusual for a Eucalypt) were very numerous all around Lake Glenmaggie. The other Eucalypt that we identified in the area was the Ironbark – *Eucalyptus tricarpa*.

*Melealeuca parvistaminea*, the Rough-barked Honey-myrtle is not a common plant, but they were quite plentiful around the lake shore, with several of them standing in the lake, which was full for the first time for ages. I hope the Melaleucas don't mind having wet feet!

The commonest wattle in the area was Australia's floral emblem the Golden Wattle – *Acacia pycnantha*, but there were 3 other wattles including a patch of Gold-dust Wattle – *Acacia acinacea*, which is not at all common in our area, although very common in the gold fields around Bendigo.

There were several flowering plants of the Downy Zieria – *Zieria cytisoides*, which although a member of the Stinkwood genus has a pungent but not unpleasant aroma to its leaves.

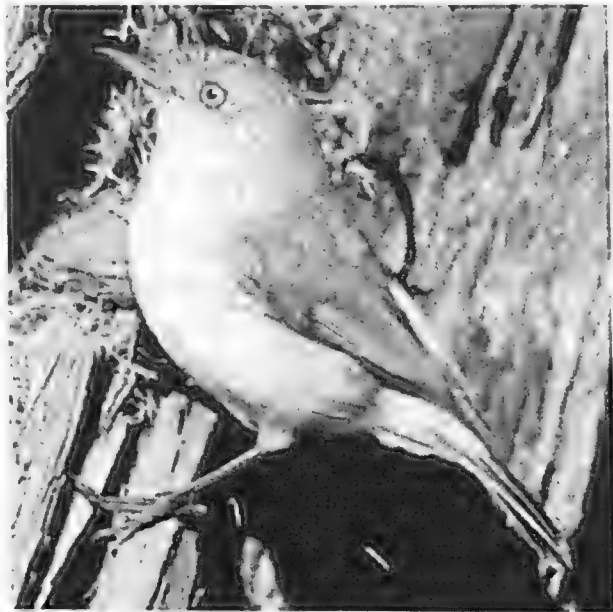
The little Pomax – *Pomax umbellata* was quite numerous and mostly running to seed. The seed heads are in umbels and it does not at first sight look at all like other members of the Rubiaceae.

The equally small Thyme Spurge – *Phyllanthus hirtellus* was unfamiliar to some of our members, but was very plentiful around the camp.

Bird-watching around the camp was very successful. David Mules compiled a list of 42 different birds and some were very special.

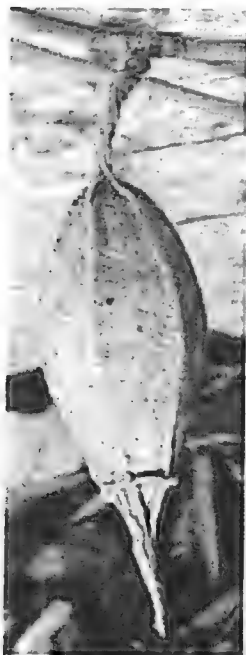
The Leaden Flycatcher (tantalising us by staying out on an island in the lake when we first found it) was the first I have ever seen and is far less common around here than the familiar Satin Flycatcher. We were surprised to see at least two Caspian Terns flying round the lake. I had always assumed these were only found along the sea coasts. Whistling Kites were plentiful and as we set out the first morning, we saw three of these birds of prey perched in the same dead tree.

The Sacred Kingfisher and the Varied Sitella are always pleasing birds to see, but for me the best find was the Buff-rumped Thornbill, because David found that they were feeding young in a nest tucked in a crevice in the bark of a eucalypt, just four feet from the ground.



This gave me my first chance to photograph these tiny birds and I was very pleased with the result. We watched them come regularly to their nest with beaks full of insects for their babies.

While we were bird-watching on the first morning, we found a very strange structure



attached to a twig. At first I thought it was a spider's egg case, and then I decided it must be some sort of cocoon, I pulled it apart with great difficulty, because it was built of very tough silky threads and inside I found the shrivelled remains of a caterpillar. This seemed to confirm it as some sort of cocoon, but I was wrong! After a lot of research, I finally discovered that there are some case-moths that are not ornamented with twigs or grass. This proved to be the case of the Ribbed Case-moth –

*Hyalarcta nigrescens*. Like most case-moths, the caterpillar builds a case around itself and lives inside it, carrying it with it as it moves through its food-plant (in this case a gum-tree). The female is flightless and never leaves its case, even laying its eggs inside the case and the little caterpillars crawl out of their mother's case and build their own case as they grow. The case has a few ornaments when it starts, but these drop off or are discarded as the case enlarges and develops the distinctive ribs.

The first evening a group of us went walking around the camp with a spotlight and were delighted to find two Sugar Gliders. The second night some members repeated this walk and again found two Sugar Gliders and also found a Ring-tail Possum.

Complete lists of the plants and birds we found in the camp area are available

Other members are writing reports of our excursions during the camp, but I thought I would add notes on a couple of special plants that we found as the other authors may not be aware of them.

On the Saturday we explored north of Licola along the Wellington River. During our explorations we lunched close to the river and just after lunch I found a plant which I said at the time was a Hop Bush, knowing

that the *Dodonaea* in that area is different from the common *Dodonaea viscosa*.

Later we did see *Dodonaea viscosa* subsp. *angustissima* and I realised that the earlier plant wasn't a *Dodonaea* at all.

I had not collected a specimen, but I had a couple of photographs although these were not very sharp as the plant was moving very freely in the wind.



It took me ages to identify it. I went through every page of the Flora of Victoria in vain. I then tried to use the key (rather hard without a specimen), and the key drew my attention to the plant having stipular sheaths around the stems at each leaf node. This led me to think of the genera *Persicaria* and *Polygonum* and thus to the family Polygonaceae and I finally tracked it down to the Twiggy Lignum - *Muehlenbeckia diclina* subsp. *stenophylla*.

*Muehlenbeckia diclina* is found mainly in the North-west of Victoria, but the subspecies *stenophylla* is found in the North-east of the state, except for "an outlying Western occurrence near Licola".

Sunday morning was spent in the Heyfield Flora Reserve. As we were walking out of the Reserve, we spotted an unusual and attractive pea shrub against the boundary fence.

A lot of effort was spent trying in vain to identify it over lunch. We considered it being a *Pultenaea*, but also thought it might be an *Aotus* or even a *Phyllota*. We did not get close to determining a species. A specimen was passed to Bon Thomson and she and I independently tried to identify it, but when we got together we were still

unable to come up with an answer and I



eventually sent the specimens to Dr Bob Parsons at Latrobe University. He replied very promptly, identifying our mystery plant as the Lax-flowered Bush-pea – *Pultenaea laxiflora*. His letter explained that he had also had great difficulty with the plant despite being assisted by a plant expert from DSE, but had finally confirmed that the plant was *P. laxiflora*. This plant is shown in the Flora to have a primarily Western and Northern distribution in Victoria, but “with isolated southern occurrences near Anglesea and Heyfield”. It is rather a special plant to have in the Heyfield Flora Reserve. We only saw one plant and perhaps special steps should be taken to propagate this plant and try and expand its base in that reserve.

Ken Harris

## Sunday morning, Heyfield Flora Reserve.

The sun was shining and the air was pleasantly warm as we readied ourselves for our first excursion of the day. Before setting off from Munjara however we were ‘entertained’ by the battle of the eastern rosellas. Four were having a serious dispute, diving, chasing, screeching, tumbling around each other, we assumed over access to a nesting hollow. [Later that day at the Heyfield Wetlands we observed a pair, one perched on a dead tree while its companion was fossicking around and eventually disappeared into a hollow below]. Anyway, off to Heyfield Flora Reserve where everyone proceed to do what Field Nats do, some on hands and knees with lens in hand, some photographing, some perusing books, delving into the minutiae of the many peas, lilies, grasses and other plants in grand endeavours of identification. Of particular

note I am told were the Peach Heath, *Lissanthe strigosa*, the Fairy Wax-flower, *Philotheca verrucosa*, [this pretty and distinctive small shrub with thickish little leaves that had wee verrucosa on the underside was far too appealing to be named after warts I thought!], Matted Bush-pea, *Pultanea pedunculata* was putting on a great display spreading and flowering over an 8 by 4 metre area and Golden Grevillea, *Grevillea chrysophaea*. This latter plant is found in quiet restricted areas and later that day at the Heyfield Wetlands there was a small planting done by local school children grown from cuttings cultivated by Wildtech Nurseryman Martin Swanson, in order to protect the ‘Heyfield genus’. Its name is derived from the Greek chrysos meaning gold and phaios – dusky brown which aptly described the attractive flowers. This area seemed unlike the dry, sandy conditions in which we had seen it growing in the morning.

Meanwhile the birdos wandered around the peripheral track. Jacky Winters were spotted. These active little birds are becoming less common south of the Divide. Observing three species of thornbills was useful in honing ID skills, Yellow-rumped, Yellow [Little] Thornbill and the Buff-rumped. The latter has a white ring around the iris.

Full bird and plant lists can be obtained from David Mules and Ken Harris respectively.

Julie Parker.

## BUNYIP SP – 26 SEPTEMBER 2009

The windscreen wipers were going at the highest speed when we drove down the freeway towards Melbourne. Gippsland was finally receiving some good spring rain. By the time we arrived at the meeting point it was dry, but a cold and gusty wind was blowing. We took Tynong North Road into the west part of the Bunyip SP which hasn’t been affected by the Black Saturday bushfires. Wendy travels this road on a weekly basis to visit her parents and showed us some interesting spots.

Our first stop was a few kilometres down the road past the quarry. The road is lined with beautiful twisted fibrous Eucalypts. They

appeared to be Silver-leaved Stringybarks, *Eucalyptus cinerea* ssp. *cephalocarpa*. The roadside is being slashed on a regular basis to maintain a firebreak, but plants don't seem to mind this fact. We only covered a small distance, but found a great variety of plants.

Common Heath (white)	<i>Epacris impressa</i>
Scented Sundew	<i>Drosera whittakeri</i>
Tall Sundew	<i>Drosera peltata</i> subsp. <i>auriculata</i>
Golden Bush-pea	<i>Pultenea gunnii</i>
Creeping Bossiaea	<i>Bossiaea prostrata</i>
Spike Wattle	<i>Acacia oxycedrus</i>
Heath Wattle	<i>Acacia brownii</i>
Blue Dampiera	<i>Dampiera stricta</i>
Rosy Baeckea	<i>Baeckea ramosissima</i> subsp. <i>ramosissima</i>
Silver Banksia	<i>Banksia marginata</i>
Wattle Mat-rush	<i>Lomandra filiformis</i>
Leopard Orchid	<i>Diuris maculata</i>
Dagger Hakea	<i>Hakea teretifolia</i>
Showy Parrot-pea	<i>Dillwynia sericea</i>

We also found a pea we couldn't identify. I had alternate needle like leaves and small clusters of flowers at the top of the stem. At home I had a look in the "Flora of Melbourne" and found two species that resembled the plants we had seen. When we met with the botany group the next Saturday Ron brought the specimen he took and we were able to confirm we had seen the Chaffy Bush-pea, *Pultenea paleacea* var. *sericia* as we could tick all the boxes for its description: straggling to prostrate shrub with narrow grey-green leaves to 20 mm long, hairy below, with recurved margins, ending in a fine tip. The variety is identified by its long, white-silky hairs on the bracts and stipules.

Our next stop was at the T-section with Camp Rd. Between the pink flowers of the Rosy Baeckea we found some real treasures.

A little orchid in bud with wiry, zigzag stems of just a few centimetres was identified as the Twisted Sun orchid, *Thelymitra flexuosa*. No chance we would see its yellow flowers on a day like this. Close by was a Mitch orchid in seed, most likely the Bearded Mitch orchid, *Genoplesium morrisii*. Another interesting found was the Hidden Violet, *Viola cleistogamoides*. Its tiny white flowers are on stems shorter than the leaves, hence its

name. Some of the Honey-pots plants, *Acrotriche serrulata* had berries. More common plants found at this stop were:

Myrtle Wattle	<i>Acacia myrtifolia</i>
Trailing Goodenia	<i>Goodenia lanata</i>
Common Hovea	<i>Hovea linearis</i>
Holly Lomatia	<i>Lomatia ilicifolia</i>
Small Grass-tree	<i>Xanthorrhoea minor</i>
Slender Bottle-daisy	<i>Lagenophora gracilis</i>

It started to rain, so it was time to move on. We turned left into Gembrook - Tonimbuk Rd and stopped at the Mortimer Picnic Ground. While some were having a belated morning tea, Jack scouted the area around the picnic ground and came back with a white flowering plant. It looked like a weed, but it appeared to be the native Hemp Bush, *Gynatrix pulchella*. We followed the walking track from the picnic ground. We were offered a lot of variety today. The first part of the walk went through temperate rain forest and we found the common plants for this type of forest. Mountain Grey Gum, *Eucalyptus cypellocarpa* was the main Eucalypt. It can be recognised by its elongated buds and its fruits with broadly flattened peduncle. Plants that stood out were large specimens of the Prickly Current-bush, *Coprosma quadrifida* and Elderberry Panax, *Polyscias sambucifolia*. The Common Bird Orchid, *Chiloglottis valida* was found in large numbers and the Maroonhood, *Pterostylis pedunculata* on several occasions. Seedlings that had just emerged were seen everywhere. "Steam" was coming from the soil while we were enjoying the warmth of the emerging sun. Unfortunately it was short lived.

When the track crossed the bitumen road Wendy took us for a little d-tour to show us the back of her parent's farm. Some started to brighten up with the idea of coffee and cake, but after a few hundred metres we only could view a steep hill with granite rocks in the distance. It would be another four kilometres to get to the house by road. So we stuck with the views and enjoyed Wendy's stories about the farm.

We returned to the track on the other side of the road and walked through dryer forest with Narrow-leaved Peppermint, *Eucalyptus radiata*. Plants found along the road and in this part of the forest were:



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

Stinkwood	<i>Zieria arborescens</i>
Sweet Bursaria	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>
Spreading Wattle	<i>Acacia genistifolia</i>
Hop Goodenia	<i>Goodenia ovata</i>
Handsomeness Flat-pea	<i>Platylobium formosa</i>
Trailing Ground-berry	<i>Acrotriche prostrata</i>
Spiny-headed Mat-rush	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>
Twining Silkpod	<i>Parsonsia brownii</i>
Wonga Vine	<i>Pandorea pandorana</i>
Pink-bells	<i>Tetradlea ciliata</i>

The final part of the track went through a swampy area where we introduced to yet another variety of plants.

Wiry Bauera	<i>Bauera rubioides</i>
Hairpin Banksia	<i>Banksia spinulosa</i>
Scented Paperbark	<i>Melaleuca squarrosa</i>
Prickly Moses	<i>Acacia verticillata</i>
Bootlace Bush	<i>Pimelea axiflora</i>
Tasman Flax-lily	<i>Dianella tasmanica</i>
Mueller's Bush-pea	<i>Pultenea muelleri</i>
Love creeper	<i>Comesperma volubile</i>
Screw fern	<i>Lindsaea linearis</i>
Scrambling Coral-fern	<i>Gleichenia microphylla</i>
Pouched Coral-fern	<i>Gleichenia dicarpa</i>
Austral King-fern	<i>Todea barbara</i>

We had lunch in the picnic area. Some planned to go on and visit the Button Grass walk, but would leave it to the weather to decide. Just a few minutes down the road we received a shower, which soon turned into hail. Jack and I were glad we decided to go home and watch the grand final.

Marja Bouman

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 19.10.2009

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 27 November:** Bird Illustration – Nic Day (Bring Simpson & Day Field Guide to meeting)

**Saturday 28 November:** Birds at Mathison Park & Morwell NP. Meet 10am Mackeys Rd carpark Mathison Park, Churchill.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 5 December – No botany due to Bird Challenge. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Saturday 5 December - Bird Challenge. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Saturday 12 December:** Club Christmas Party at Ken & Fay Harris's, 26 Haverbrack Cres, Churchill, 12 noon. BYO chairs, tables, food and drink. Punch and Christmas cake

supplied. Boiling water for tea and coffee available. Phil will prepare quiz. **How to get there** - see page 6.

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1466.21. Investment A/c \$12,285.78.

### Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence

Archivist – Marja Bouman has offered to take over this position.

Public address system has been purchased.

Program for 2010 – discussed progress.

Summer Camp at Omeo – Wendy and Ken visited area to plan excursions and accommodation. Will start list at GM.

Ollerton Reserve interpretive signage – have received request for \$1000 from Kevin Jones. Will send cheque.

SEANA camp 2010 - subcommittee to meet 5 November. Flyer was distributed at SEANA camp at the Grampians which was attended by 13 LVFNC members.

Indigenous Design request for club participation in vegetation surveys at TRUenergy CMP blocks – received email and letter from Harley Schinagl, but as they wanted us to participate in October and it arrived after our meeting, it was too late to organize members at short notice. Rang him to discuss request, and they will give us a few months' notice next year.

Spring Camp at Glenmaggie – enjoyable camp for the 19 who attended. Spent Saturday in Licola area and Sunday at Heyfield and counted Purple Diuris at Dawson.

Bird Challenge Saturday 5 December – Alix has prepared sheet for members to fill in at GM to indicate if they will participate.

Purple Diuris count at Longford will be Wednesday 21 October at 10am.

Brochures and Latrobe Nature Guide to be dropped into Traralgon visitor centre and DSE Parks Vic office. Phil will take over from Bon.

Yinnar/Yinnar South Landcare survey in reserve at Yinnar done by botany group. Good attendance, and a list of about 120 plants made. John Topp will have final list.

### Conservation Matters

Nothing to report.

### FOR THE DIARY

**Photo Competition** is happening next year – check full details page 2 July Naturalist.



**Club Summer Camp at Omeo – 22-25 January 2010.** Participants to choose and book own accommodation. No charge through the club to attend as members will be paying own expenses. It is planned to organize evening meal venues together. Activities are planned for Saturday, Sunday, and Monday morning, with a day in the Anglers Rest area and a day in the Mt Hotham area. There are good places for walking and bird watching around Omeo. Full details, including range and costs of accommodation available at November GM, or from Secretary by email or post. Contact: [savage@dcsl.net.au](mailto:savage@dcsl.net.au) or ☎ 5634 2246.

**Macks Creek Restoration Project – Thursday 17 Dec.** Meet 4pm at Macks Creek Hall (cnr Bulga Park Rd & Baxter Rd) for a site visit to view this restoration of a corridor of warm temperate rainforest along Macks Creek, returning to the Hall for an evening BBQ (food and tea/coffee provided).

All welcome. RSVP to Richard Appleton, [rappleton@hvp.com.au](mailto:rappleton@hvp.com.au), ☎ 5122 0609 by 1 December for catering purposes.

## SEANA SPRING CAMP AT DUNKELD

The SEANA Spring 2009 camp in the Southern Grampians region was hosted by the Hamilton Field Naturalists Club in fine style. Based at the Grampians Retreat and Field Studies Centre at the foot of Mount Abrupt, near Dunkeld, the camp was well attended, with about 120 participants arriving on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October. The venue was excellent, providing comfortable facilities in an attractive bushland setting together with plenty of space for evening talks, meetings and dinners. It was great, too, to see a few younger than usual naturalists at this camp.

The Hamilton club organized a wide range of mostly half-day excursions across Saturday and on Sunday morning. As most were offered at least twice, this ensured small group sizes and therefore good interaction with the leaders. The focus of activity was naturally on plants in flower, but Lake Linlithgow and nearby wetlands such as Bryans Swamp (with many duck species) to the south of Dunkeld were of interest to the birdos.

Rod Bird led one of the Saturday morning excursions, to the Grampians Rifle Range, where something like 18 orchid species in flower were found in an hour or so. These included a beautiful solitary Large Duck

Orchid, *Caleana major*, the Small Spider-orchid, *Arachnorchis parva*, the Large White Spider-orchid, *A. venusta*, profusions of Waxlips and Wallflower orchids, the Musky Caladenia, *C. angustata*, and the Bronze Caladenia, *C. iridescens*.

On Saturday afternoon, Roger Thompson and Bronwen Clark took one group to the very scenic Cassidy's Gap area, via a rough road which crosses from the Halls Gap- Dunkeld Road to the Victoria Valley Road. The gap itself affords stunning views of the ranges running roughly north-south. In addition to a further profusion of orchids, the Grampians Trigger-plant, *Stylidium soboliferum*, with its ground-hugging rosettes of leaves, was of particular interest – being (in the absence of flowers) totally unlike the trigger-plant familiar to us. Here is the Corrick and Fuhrer description: "Perennial plant with flowering stem c. 5-15 cm high. Leaves 1-2 cm long, terminating in a fine bristle and forming a tight, basal rosette. Flowers 8-17 mm diam., pale pink or white inside, reddish outside." Also of interest was a mass of bright yellow Golden Moth orchids, *Diuris pedunculata*, growing at a very wet site near the corner of Cassidy Gap Road and the Victoria Valley Road.

One of Sunday morning's excursions was a ramble on the lower slopes of Mt Sturgeon, near Dunkeld, led by Janeen Samuel – two of the party actually reached the summit. A couple of white slime mould specimens showing evidence of recent movement captured our attention, along with the admittedly somewhat more attractive displays of many plants in flower including many of the orchids seen earlier in this very rewarding weekend.

Philip Rayment

**CHRISTMAS PARTY** - Ken and Fay Harris' home – 26 Haverbrack Cres, Churchill. Drive **south** through Churchill on Monash Way. At southern edge of town, turn **left** into Glendonald Rd. After about 1.25km turn **right** into Haverbrack Cres (2<sup>nd</sup> entrance). Number 26 is a short distance up on the left (second house).

## SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE ED

A big thank you to all helpers and contributors throughout the year. Best wishes for 2010. ★

NEXT ISSUE POSTED EARLY FEBRUARY

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: savage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number has changed.

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Family \$38 ☐ Single \$29 ☐ Junior/Student \$22 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

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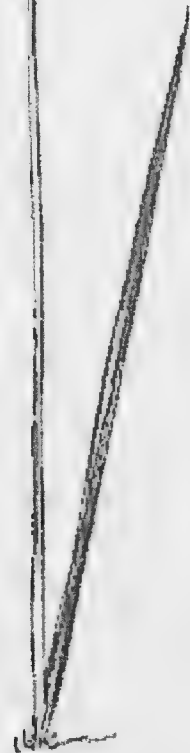
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Issue No. 528



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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## LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 26 February

Fire & Gardens – Greg Moore

Excursion: Saturday 27 February

Digger Island Coastal Geology. Meet **12 NOON** at the T intersection where Bear Gully Rd commences from the Walkerville South Rd. More details see BM Notes p3.

Bird Group:

Tuesday 2 March 8.30am Brodribb Rd Wetland. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 6 March. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 26 March

AGM. Birds of the Antarctic – David Stickney

Excursion: Saturday 27 March

Lakes NP. For car pooling meet 8.45am carpark corner Princes Hwy & Whittakers Rd, Traralgon (Mexican Rest.). Meet 10.30 Loch Sport Hall in National Park Rd.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

---

FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

---

FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

---

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (MARCH): 12 MARCH 2010**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

Subscriptions for 2010-11 due 1 March 2010. See inside back cover for details.



## SPRING CAMP – OCT 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> 2009 HEYFIELD WETLANDS

After lunching at Dawson on Sunday, the spring camp was almost at an end, but some of us decided to visit the Heyfield Wetlands as a conclusion to the camp. When we got there, we found first that the Information Centre was closed, so there was no access to toilets and then it started to rain! It wasn't light rain either and seemed set in for a while. We stood under shelter on the balcony round the information centre and saw half a dozen sorts of birds, but soon decided that a walk in the reserve was out of the question, so we retired to a coffee shop in Heyfield and had coffee and cakes instead.

When we emerged from the coffee shop, the rain had finally moved away and I decided it wasn't too late for a quick walk round the wetland reserve. No one wanted to accompany me, so I completed the camp walking round the Heyfield Wetlands on my own.

I found it well worth while! In my walk I recorded 32 different birds. Nothing particularly unusual, but it was good to see that the Reed Warblers were back in force, although they insisted on singing from deep in the reed beds and wouldn't pose for a photograph.

As well as the usual Black Duck and Chestnut Teal, there was one Hardhead in the reserve and I found both Brown and



Yellow Thornbills. I felt that the Brown Thornbills probably had a nest nearby as I sat on a bench and watched them, but I couldn't locate where the nest was.

As I sat watching the thornbills and Superb Fairy-wrens, a Shining Bronze Cuckoo was calling nearby. It came closer and closer until it was singing in the bush right next to my bench, giving me my first chance to photograph one without having Rohan Bugg to call it up for me!

After that I left hurriedly as the rain looked like returning.

Ken Harris

## WALK TO SEALERS COVE, WILSONS PROMONTORY. SEPTEMBER 2009

Mary Ellis, who spoke to our club on her book "The History of Gardening in Victoria" arranged a walk to Sealers Cove for anyone who wanted to join her. It turned out there were only six of us, but fortunately Ken Harris was one of those, so that saved us having to carry our botany books.

We left the Telegraph Saddle carpark at 10 am and took 4 hours to walk the 10 km out to the beach, but were able to make it back in around 2½ hours when we weren't stopping to look at all the plants.

The first part of the track had been burnt in the February fires, and this created new views across to the sea near Tidal River. The ground was mostly bare and the tree trunks were black, but the gums were producing fresh green shoots, as were the King Ferns and a patch of Scented Paperbarks growing in a gully. The fire had bared the masses of tangled stems of the Tall Saw-sedge *Gahnia clarkei*, but their leaf growth showed they were alive and well. Grass trees were looking very healthy and sending up tall flower stalks. Small herbs and shrubs were germinating creating fresh green growth on the bare earth. A few clumps of orchids were spotted: Nodding and Tall Greenhoods and a Spider Orchid, probably the Wine-lipped Spider Orchid - *Caladenia oenochila*. Some good patches of a very distinctive fungus were found – the Morel *Morchella elata*. They had wrinkled brown egg-shaped caps attached to thick creamy stems and apparently are good to eat. The calls of Grey

Currawongs and Crescent Honeyeaters were noticeable, but we weren't really looking at birds.

We left the burnt area after a few kilometers and rose up to Windy Saddle, well named as it's an exposed patch of open grass with views back to the coast. Still 6.5 km to go and we'd spent ages getting this far!

Next we descended, walking along a narrower track which was rocky and moist underfoot – in fact quite soggy in places as a result of recent good rains. We started to see a lot of ferns as we were in dense vegetation on a south fall. Hard Water Fern *Blechnum wattsii* grew extensively along the track, but before we reached the coast another five *Blechnums* had been identified. A few specimens of Strap Water-fern *B. patersonii*, Ray Water-fern *B. fluviatile* and Lance Water-fern *B. chambersii* were all located on the side of the track and Gristle-fern *B. cartilagineum* was found growing much further along. When we walked along the 1.8 km length of boardwalk through the swampy area near the coast Fishbone Water-fern *B. nudum* was the predominant ground plant, along with Mother Shield-fern *Polystichum proliferum*.

Deep in a gully along the track was a small patch of rainforest with Southern Sassafras, Myrtle Beech and huge Banyallas in flower. The tree fern trunks and rocks along the track were verdant with mosses and small ferns. Gipsy Fern *Ctenopteris heterophylla* was very prolific and there was a lot of Finger Fern *Grammitis billardieri*. Filmy ferns were growing quite happily in this moist sheltered environment and Ken identified both Shiny Filmy-fern *Hymenophyllum flabellatum* and Common Filmy-fern *H. cupressiforme* as well as the Veined Bristle-fern *Crepidomanes venosum*. The world's largest moss *Dawsonia superba*, looking like miniature pine trees grew beside the track. It seemed strange that in this same environment there was lots of Common Heath *Epacris impressa* growing. It had bright orange flowers and shone out amongst the greenery.

We puzzled over the identification of the predominant eucalypt growing along the latter part of the track. It looked a little like

Mountain Ash, but its sock grew to at least half the height of the tree and it had masses of bark ribbons hanging from the smooth upper trunk. It was Shining Peppermint *Eucalyptus nitida* and grows mainly in Tasmania, but extends through the Bass Strait islands to the southern Prom, where it is not common.

Masses of Kangaroo Fern *Microsorium punctatum* grew up tree trunks and on rotting logs and rocks all along the track, but the really interesting find for me was its close relative the Fragrant Fern *M. scandens*. The plants we saw were clothing tree trunks along the boardwalk and had long symmetrical pinnate fronds hanging down.

Although the weather at the start of the walk was cool with threatening rain, by the time we reached the boardwalk the sun was shining. It was all greenery and dappled sunlight as we walked through the Lilly Pillies and ferns. The creeks we crossed were tannin stained and groups of little fish could be spotted.

As we added more and more ferns to our mental list, Mary recalled a wonderful 'fern' walk in the Gunyah Gunyah with Ellen Lyndon where they had recorded 15 species. When we arrived at Sealers Cove, Mary wrote down the ferns we'd seen and there were 29 species!

The sun continued to shine as we ate our lunch on the beach at Sealers Cove. Mary had been looking for the Rock Banksia *Banksia saxicola* which was once considered a variant of *B. integrifolia* and grows in this area. She collected specimens of banksia leaves, flowers and fruits to take back for Celia Rosser, but is not yet sure of its correct identification.

I would love to have stayed on the beach for hours, but with the long walk back ahead that wasn't an option. This was one of the prettiest, most interesting walks I've been on, and it opened up another lovely part of Wilsons Promontory for me.

## FernList

*Histiopteris incisa* Bat's Wing Fern

*Pteridium esculentum* Austral Bracken

*Adiantum aethiopicum* Common Maidenhair

*Blechnum cartilagineum* Gristle-fern  
*Blechnum patersonii* Strap Water-fern  
*Blechnum fluviatile* Ray Water-fern  
*Blechnum watsii* Hard Water-fern  
*Blechnum nudum* Fishbone Water-fern  
*Blechnum chambersii* Lance Water-fern  
*Gleichenia microphylla* Scrambling Coral-fern  
*Sticherus lobatus* Spreading Fan-fern  
*Tmesipteris parva* Small Fork-fern  
*Cyathea australis* Rough Tree-fern  
*Dicksonia antarctica* Soft Tree-fern  
*Todea barbara* Austral King-fern  
*Grammitis billardieri* Finger Fern  
*Ctenopteris heterophylla* Gipsy Fern  
*Microsorium punctatum* Kangaroo Fern  
*Microsorium scandens* Fragrant Fern  
*Asplenium bulbiferum* Mother Spleenwort  
*Asplenium flabellifolium* Necklace Fern  
*Polystichum proliferum* Mother Shield-fern  
*Lastreopsis acuminata* Shiny Shield-fern  
*Rumohra adiantiformis* Leathery Shield-fern  
*Hymenophyllum flabellatum* Shiny Filmy-fern  
*Hymenophyllum cupressiforme* Common Filmy-fern  
*Calochlaena dubia* Common Ground-fern  
*Pellaea falcata* Sickie Fern  
*Crepidomanes venosum* Veined Bristle-fern

Wendy Savage, with help from Ken Harris and Mary Ellis.

## BOTANY WITH SPRINGSURE HILL LANDCARE GROUP

On a fine but cool day, early in September, the botany group and the Springsure Hill Landcare Group met at Gunn Road, for a day of botanising and bird watching. This event is now in its third year, and is popular with both groups.

With the aid of a handout, kindly prepared by Caroline, the group headed off along Gunn Road, and familiarized themselves with many of the plants found growing in the area. Some of the large *Eucalyptus* proved somewhat harder to identify, and after much searching for evidence, were deemed to be hybrids. A patch of bush that had been burnt by a spot fire, during the February 7<sup>th</sup> bushfires, was checked to see if any fire emergent species were present, but it seemed we were a bit too early.

After a lovely barbecue lunch, it was off to a small parcel of bush along the Old Sale

Road. The lovely open grassy forest, with patches of thicker *Kunzea*, was in stark contrast to the morning's damp forest. With over 60 species of plants to be found, the group dispersed to explore the many parts of the forest. Most of the winter flowering plants were finishing, and only a few spring flowering ones were open, but a good number of winter and spring flowering Orchids were found. We were given a demonstration on how to identify the Yertchuk or Prickly Stringybark, *Eucalyptus consideniana*, by running your hand up and down the trunk.

We thank all members who attended the day. See you next year.

Andrew Green

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 23.11.2009

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Botany Group:** Saturday 6 February 2010. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

Botany for February – 6 March 2010.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 2 March Brodribb Road Wetland/Mathison Park. Meet at the Wetland by 8.30am. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Friday 26 February:** Fire & Gardens – Greg Moore

**Saturday 27 February:** Digger Island (Walkerville South) Coastal Geology – Graeme Rowe. Meet **12 NOON** at the T intersection where Bear Gully Road commences from the Walkerville South Rd. We then convoy across the farm to the gate at the start of the short walking track to Digger Island. Carrying lunch, we then botanise with Terri Allen along the track to the beach near the island. After lunch guided geology walk commences at 1.30pm. Low tide is 4pm (0.32m). Be prepared for wet feet. Finish at 5pm.

**Friday 26 March:** AGM. Birds of the Antarctic – David Stickney

**Saturday 27 March:** Lakes NP. For car pooling meet 8.45 carpark at corner of Princes Hwy and Whittakers Rd, Traralgon (Mexican Restaurant). Meet 10.30 outside Loch Sport hall in National Park Rd. Don't forget – slip, slop, slap and insect repellent.

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$190.21.  
Investment A/c \$12,266.78.

## **Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence**

Program for 2010 – should be ready by Christmas Party.

Summer Camp at Omeo – program has been prepared, to be emailed and handed out.

SEANA camp 2010 – first meeting of subcommittee met and discussed planned mail outs and possible excursions and speakers. Phil has documented our progress.

Purple Diuris count at Longford – good participation and Ken Harris presented report at GM.

*Prostanthera galbraithiae* in Holey Plains – Ralph Laby suggested that we fence plants to reduce browsing by wallabies. After consultation decided it was better to leave them as they are as the ‘pruning’ is natural and the conditions under which they have survived in the past. Their poor condition is probably exacerbated by the drought conditions.

Nature Guide Posters – outlets may like more posters to advertise book. Wendy has 6, and we can purchase more posters at \$1.80 each if needed.

Duck Shooting – a permanent ban on recreational duck shooting has been endorsed by delegates at the ALP Victorian State Conference. This ban is now policy of the Labour Party, and the Victorian State Government is required under the party’s rules to implement the policy through legislation.

Summer Camp 2011 to be held at Gelantipy 21-24 January. Have contacted Karoonda Park where we have stayed in the past. Can have a package of evening meals and accommodation with good choice of rooms.

VEAC (Vic Environment Assessment Council) are conducting a Remnant Native Vegetation Investigation. Will be community consultation (meeting 3 Dec) and final report March 2010. Jackie will attend but is concerned about the wasted effort and resources when the Native Vegetation Plan by CMA, Greening Aust and Trust for Nature have all done this before.

Ken Harris won the Victorian Environment Friends Network 2009 Best Friend Award for his work in Morwell NP. Congratulations to Ken.

Morwell River falls Reserve management plan has been prepared for works over the next 5 years. David tabled report.

## **Conservation Matters**

Nothing to report.

## **NOTICE OF AGM 26 MARCH**

Positions for re-election:

Secretary, VPs 2 and 3, Publicity Officer

## **GUEST SPEAKER FOR FEBRUARY**

Now retired, **Dr Greg Moore** was the Head of the University of Melbourne’s Institute of Land and Food Resources at Burnley (previously Burnley Horticultural College), where he taught Arboriculture, Ecology, Revegetation, and Plant Function. His research interests include Establishment of Native Plants in Disturbed Sites, and Responses of Woody plants to Fire and Other Environmental Stresses.

## **PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION**

As part of the celebrations for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year, the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists Club is holding a natural history photographic competition.

Entries for the competition will now be accepted.

We want to showcase the work of the many photographers in the club and put together a very special display of photographs.

Entries will only be accepted from current members of the LVFNC and all pictures must be taken in Australia, its territories or the surrounding oceans.

We are offering 10 sections and entrants may submit up to 2 pictures in each of the 10 sections, making a maximum of 20 pictures per entrant.

The 10 sections are designated as:

- i Trees
- ii Flowering Shrubs
- iii Wildflowers (non-shrubby plants)
- iv Orchids
- v Ferns, Mosses and Liverworts



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

- vi Fungi (including Lichens and Slime Moulds)
- vii Birds
- viii Mammals, Reptiles and Amphibians
- ix Insects Spiders and other invertebrates
- x Landscapes and natural formations, including fire effects

We are not in a position to offer any prizes, but certificates will be awarded to the winners in each section and one picture will be selected as the overall winner.

## Timetable:

Nov/Dec 2009 Issue of Entry Forms

1 January 2010 Start of entry period

30 June 2010 Entries close

Sat 11 Sept 2010 Judging

Sat 11 Sept 2010 Presentation of awards

12-22 Sept 2010 Display in Traralgon

15-18 Oct 2010 Display at SEANA Camp

Pictures will be submitted as prints and any size from 4" x 6" up to A4 8" x 12" will be accepted. We are also asking where possible for equivalent digital images to help us in putting together a show of the images.

Ken Harris

## HOLEY PLAINS SP – FLORA & FAUNA

Lecture: Friday 23 October 2009. Speaker: our own Ken Harris. Ken is a long standing member of LVFNC, a well-published author and is a recipient of two individual environmental conservation awards.

Ken has made numerous visits to HPSP since settling in Victoria back in '85. Subsequently he has amassed a lot of knowledge about the park, particularly on changes that have occurred there over the past 25 years. HPSP was proclaimed a state park in 1977 and is located in East Gippsland, being roughly bordered by Rosedale to the west and Longford to the east with Merriman's Creek as its southern boundary. It occupies approx. 10460 hectares. Historically, it was a part of a squatting lease first taken up by the Crooke family during the 1840's. Never used for agricultural purposes due to its inferior sandy, gravelly soil it has since evolved to support a wide diversity of native flora and abundance of wild life along with camping, walking, picnicking and other park activities. It is thought to have been named Holey Plains after innumerable holes of yabby/ant/spider?

origin that are to be found in season on tracks and grounds throughout the park.

Ken then showed his audience some of his extensive image collection of flora & fauna for about an hour.

Some highlights of those shown were the Holey Plains Mintbush (*Prostanthera galbraithiae*) this species only being formally named as recently as the late 1970's. The giant Wedge-pea (*Hakea salicifolia*) grows up to 1 m. tall and yellow and the common Wedge-pea (*Gompholobium latifolium*) cream in colour, are also quite common here. Examples of various varieties of Grevilleas, Heaths, Wattles and Crimson Bottlebrush (*Callistemon citrinus*) and some fine and tiny Orchids were shown.

These species do extremely well in the sandy soil at HPSP.

Some reptiles observed here were the White-bellied Skink and the common Garden skink (*Lampropholis guichenoti*); the Blotched Blue-tongue (*Tiliqua nigrolutea*) along with the Common Blue-tongue lizard. Several good examples of the Red-bellied Black snake (*Pseudechis porphyriacus*) were also observed and photographed here.

Birds species here are profuse in number, amongst the not so common birds found in HPSP were the white throated Night-Jar (*Eurostopodus mystacalis*), the Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*), and the Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) the latter bird being a somewhat unusual sighting in eastern Victoria. This park is also very good for spotting parrots, lorikeets, rosellas, and sulphur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*)

Mobs of Grey Kangaroos and individual Swamp Wallabies can also be frequently sighted here.

Some good stands of tree specimens found here are the Buloke say 'bulloaks' (*Casuarina luehmannii*) and Yertchuk (*Eucalyptus consideniana*) - its more useful common name being Prickly Stringy-Bark.

Ken attracted and identified 18 species of Moths that are to be found/seen here at dusk and also several species of Caddisflies.

I personally found this to be a most enjoyable, informative and well-illustrated presentation.

Lawrie Waddington



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# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number has changed.

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*Subscriptions are due on March 1<sup>st</sup> each year. (Half fees apply for those joining after 31<sup>st</sup> August)*

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MARCH 2010

Issue No. 529



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 26 March

Excursion: Saturday 27 March

Bird Group:

Botany Group:

AGM. Birds of the Antarctic – David Stickney

Lakes NP. For car pooling meet 8.45am carpark at Mexican Restaurant, Traralgon. Meet 10.30 Loch Sport Hall in National Park Rd. More details see **page 6**.

Due to Easter TRU survey only this month, Thursday 15 April 9.30am Wetland gate. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

Saturday 3 April – autumn flowering orchids at Moondarra SP. Meet at turnoff to Moondarra Reservoir on Moe-Erica Rd. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

---

Meeting: Friday 23 April

Excursion: Saturday 24 April

Fungi – Geoff Lay

Fungi at Tarra Bulga NP. Meet 10am visitor centre carpark Balook. For car pooling meet 9.15am carpark at Mexican Restaurant, Traralgon.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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### FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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### FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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### SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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### FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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### HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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### FRIENDS OF MOE-YALLOURN RAIL TRAIL

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (APRIL): 9 APRIL 2010**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>



DIURIS PUNCTATA SURVEY FOR 2009

In October each year the LVFNC carries out a survey of two sites where the Purple Diuris – *Diuris punctata* grows.

The first site is at Dawson in a little reserve along the old railway line. The second site is actually two different adjacent sites on the Rosedale to Longford Road.

The surveys took place this year on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2009 (Dawson), 21<sup>st</sup> October 2009 (Longford Rd).

The Dawson survey was planned for 13<sup>th</sup> October, but the LVFNC annual spring camp was held in the Heyfield area and included a visit to the Heyfield Flora Reserve on the morning of 11<sup>th</sup> October, and since we were so close it was decided to bring the survey forward and complete it after lunch that day. This provided us with a much larger team than usual and this large team enabled us to make a single sweep over each of the two patches of orchids at Dawson instead of having to divide the areas into narrow strips for counting. The whole count was completed in a shorter time than usual (just before heavy rain arrived).

DAWSON

South Side	169
North Side	196
+ just outside marked areas	23
Total for Dawson.	388

LONGFORD

Tanjil Rd junction	
South/west end of road from markers	2593
Opposite side of road	125
Area between markers	218
Area on opposite side of road from markers	787 3723
Chessum Rd junction	
Eastern Area from Chessum Road	
South Side to second pole	1019
South Side past second pole	1178
Fenced area on north side of road	1687

just outside fenced area (adjacent to road)

7 3891

Total for Longford Road 7614

The Dawson site was again exceptionally dry so that very few other plants were in flower much as in 2008. No *Diuris sulphurea* plants were observed this time in the North-east corner of the North Side marked area. The count was made a little early so that only 30% of the plants were in flower, but plants in bud were well grown and easily recognised and 388 plants were located giving a pleasing 64% increase from the rather low count in 2008.

The Longford Road count, although a day later than last year also proved to be too early (flowering on both sites seems to be later than usual this year). Again only 30% were in flower, but the team of volunteers were enough to make a very thorough search and the plants in bud were easily recognised.

The further clearing of Burgan on the north side of the road west of the first marked area is coming back strongly, out competing the orchids and making locating plants difficult. Vic Roads report an intention to re-treat this area later this summer after the orchids have completed the flowering and seeding cycle.

At the Chessum Road site the western section which was only slashed, has considerable regrowth of the Burgan and only a small number of orchids were found amongst the Burgan (although there were plenty of *Thelymitra rubra*). Vic Roads say they will be further treating the Burgan to give the whole area back to the Orchids.

At the Chessum Road site a beautiful near white flowered *Diuris punctata* was found (and photographed).



At both the Longford Road sites there was an increase in the number of plants recorded with an

overall increase from 6191 to 7619 plants between 2008 and 2009. The total of 7619 making it the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest total in 16 years of regular counting. Only 2003 with 7756 and 2004 with a massive 15711 plants have exceeded this years total.

Ken Harris

## **PLANTS & POLLINATORS – CATHY POWERS SEPT 25<sup>TH</sup> 2009**

Cathy Powers photographs orchids for a hobby, and has become very interested in orchid pollination. Her talk and wonderful digital photos illustrated many different types of insect pollination, and she informed us about the known mechanisms as well as suggesting theories for some of the unknowns.

She started with some facts about orchids and their structure. The orchid family contributes about 10% of entire plant species with over 25,000 species. All orchids have 3 sepals and 3 petals but have bilateral rather than radial symmetry. This is because of the altered design of the third petal to become the labellum (tongue). Their reproductive component is made up of one large stamen and one large style fused together to form a club-headed rod called the column.

Orchids are mainly pollinated by insects and many orchids rely on a specific pollinator. A theory is that orchid structure began with a sun orchid like ancestor and evolved a new design relevant to the pollinator. A change in the pollinator could arise from a change in the flower structure. The changed plant could then be isolated due to the inability to exchange pollen. The flower could develop the ability to produce seed without fertilization.

Orchids often trick insects into pollinating them by:

### **Deceiving a male into thinking it is a female by emitting an odour similar to the female's pheromone**

The Elbow Orchid lures the Thynnine wasp who tries to mate with the labellum, but as he lifts the labellum it swings up on its hinged attachment and hurls him into the column. When he emerges he may be carrying a pollen package, which if he

repeats the performance on another flower will attach it to the column.

### **Mimicking a pollen producing non-orchid flower**

The Pale Vanilla Lily *Arthropodium milleflorum* has blackish porous anthers that are 'buzz-pollinated', that is they require shaking to dislodge the pollen. The 'Black-tongue' *Stegostyla congesta* has a black labellum and it lures bees which vibrate it in a futile attempt to dislodge non-existent pollen.

### **Imitating a nectar producing flower**

Native male bees may visit an orchid which strongly resembles a known pollen producer. These must flower at the same time and be near each other.

Examples given were:

*Gompholobium huegelii* and *Diuris chryseopsis*

*Daviesia ulicifolia* and *Diuris pardina*

### **Resembling or smelling like a plant they feed on**

Helmet orchids (*Anzybas*, *Corybas* & *Corysanthes*) are pollinated by fungus flies and may mimic fungal growth, such as *Corybas aconitiflorus* which resemble tiny toadstools. They grow in damp areas during the winter months when there is an abundance of fruiting fungus. Flowers of some species have a fungal type odour.

### **Providing nectar**

Leek orchids are unusual in that they actually produce nectar, but the nectar containing cells located on the labellum have to be punctured.

Cathy also gave more information about orchid reproduction.

The pollen grains in most orchids are aggregated into pollinia - packets containing thousands of pollen grains and are usually removed as a unit. Insect pollinated flowers have firm packets attached to a viscid disc. The viscid matter sticks the pollinia to the insect and sets like cement, hard and dry in a few minutes. Once detached from the orchid the pollinia packet begins to deteriorate.

Orchid seeds are among the smallest of plant seeds. Their tiny size and corresponding light weight facilitate wind-aided dispersal but this benefit comes at a cost. The seeds are so minute that they have almost no nutrients to support the growth of an embryo. Because they cannot germinate and grow on their own, they rely on certain fungi to supply water and nutrients. At least some of the fungi involved colonise and decompose decaying wood. Cathy wondered if the orchid would 'trick' the fungus into inserting its growing filaments into its seed and roots by mimicking the chemical cues provided by the decaying material.

She concluded with the statement that in some cases, the pollinator and the deceptive orchid appear to be in a race, with the orchid evolving better attractant scents and the pollinators evolving better discriminating capacity.

Cathy showed excellent photographs which captured a number of orchids being pollinated by insects, and these can be seen on her website at <http://www.banjarah.com>.

Wendy Savage

## OUTING TO HOLEY PLAINS

The club excursion in late October 2009 was to Holey Plains State Park. First stop was Harrier Swamp for a stroll around it. The swamp had clearly suffered very seriously from the 13 or so years of drought. No water was visible through the very thick growth of reeds. And some of the usual inhabitants were missing - for example there were no Swamp Harriers and only one frog species was heard.

This was a good area for Guinea-flowers, or Hibbertias, with 3 species present and flowering- including Prickly Guinea-flower, *H. acicularis*, in the carpark, and, along the walk Twiggy Guinea-flower, *H. virgata* and Bundled Guinea-flower, *H. prostrata*.

There were also lots of orchid species in flower, including numerous Wax-lips, *Glossodia major*, with showy purple flowers. Also eye catching were several rather tall Tiger Orchids, *Diuris sulphurea*, with bright yellow flowers. Parsons Bands was observed, as was *Caladenia pusilla* with a small pink flower. Occasional

Kookaburras were heard and seen amongst the trees and a Pallid Cuckoo was calling. And some potholes in the sandy soil indicated Echidnas were about.

The next stop was the site of the very rare *Prostanthera galbraithiae* and we found numerous plants. Most had a few flowers but they did appear to have been grazed, possibly by wallabies. Amongst the *Prostantheras* was an interesting *Boronia*, *B. anemonifolia* which has pink flowers and deeply lobed leaves with an unpleasant odour when crushed. Leafless Globe Pea, *Sphaerolobium vimineum*, was flowering there too. And an Olive Whistler could be heard in the background.

The lunch-stop was at Merriman's Creek and we were fortunate to be entertained by a Lace Monitor clamped on a tree trunk only a few metres away. After we had plenty of time to take photographs it descended very slowly and moved away in very slow motion. Close by there were some little mauve Bottle Daisies and also a large patch of Maroonhood Orchids.



Photo Phil Rayment

After lunch we went to the highest point of the reserve, Holey Hill, and strolled round the Banksia Forest Track. One highlight there was a large-flowered mauve daisy, *Brachyscome spathulata*.

To round off the day Ken Harris took us to a couple of places near Chessum Rd where two species of Duck-Orchid were flowering or close to it - the Small Duck-Orchid, *Caleana minor*, and Flying Duck-Orchid, *C. major*. At the later stop there was a small Bluebell flowering right in the roadway - amazing that it could survive there.

Ron Carey

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 22.2.2010

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 26 March: AGM.** Birds of the Antarctic – David Stickney

**Saturday 27 March:** Lakes NP. For car pooling meet 8.45 carpark at corner of Princes Hwy and Whittakers Rd, Traralgon (Mexican Restaurant). Meet 10.30 outside Loch Sport hall in National Park Rd. Don't forget – slip, slop, slap and insect repellent.

**Friday 23 April:** Fungi – Geoff Lay

**Saturday 24 April:** Fungi Excursion to Tarra Bulga NP. Meet 10am Visitors Centre carpark at Balook. Car pooling meet 9.15 carpark at Mexican Restaurant, Traralgon.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 3 April – autumn flowering orchids at Moondarra SP. Meet 10am at turn-off to Moondarra Reservoir on Moe-Erica Rd. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Thursday 15 February – TRU survey only due to Easter. Meet 9.30. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$228.71. Investment A/c \$11,852.36.

### Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence

Summer Camp 2011 to be held at Gelantipy 21-24 January staying at Karoonda Park – have booked family cabins which have 2-3 bedrooms so will each accommodate 4-6 people. All bedding is supplied. Price

\$30/person/night. Motel suites (2) are \$70 a double. Booked catered evening meal Sat & Sun at \$25/person/meal. Sent \$100 deposit.

VEAC (Vic Env Assessment Council) are conducting a Remnant Vegetation Investigation. Jackie attended meeting in Traralgon Dec 3 and found it quite worthwhile. Expect it will be ongoing.

SEANA camp progress – accommodation quotes finalized, and excursions planned with leaders being contacted. Will brief members at April GM and ask for volunteers to assist with running of camp. Motion: That we set up an account named LVFNC Inc SEANA Inc Camp. We authorize David Mules, David Stickney & Wendy Savage to be signatories with any two to sign. That we transfer \$200 from the investment account to open this account. D Mules/P Rayment motion passed.

Club History progress – Phil has prepared first draft and circulated it to working group for comment. Next meeting 10 March at Phil's.

*Muelleria* – Bon has been receiving this Herbarium publication on behalf of the club and summarizing them for the Botany group. She would like someone else to be the designated club member to receive it. Ken Harris will take over this role.

Eric Lubcke Reserve – concern that items listed in Management Plan have not been followed up. Will send letter to Latrobe CC after David has checked its state.

AGM planning – nomination forms to be prepared for GM. Positions vacant: Sec, VP 2&3, Publicity Officer. Subscriptions will remain the same as last year.

*Nature of Latrobe* sales – ask members to check book stocks and collect money.

Photographic competition – entry forms and labels for attaching to photo entries will be available at GMs and excursions, or posted by contacting Ken Harris. Closing date June 30. Photos will be displayed at Traralgon & District Art Society "Art on Track Gallery" in Queens Parade, Traralgon September 11-19. Will require assistants to set up and man display.



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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Summer Bird Survey – Denis Nagle requests volunteers Feb 20 to March 6.

Owl Surveys with Rolf Willig – program and dates available from David, starting March 2.

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations – Club inaugurated 24 February 1960. Will celebrate with a cake as part of the AGM. Phil and Gill will organize purchase of large cake.

SEANA January committee meeting report – at March camp in Ballarat, each club will be given 2 minutes to present issues that concern them. Phil has been asked to take on Secretary of SEANA, is willing to take it on after October camp.

Birds of Latrobe Region – Alix has prepared 3 fold brochure and will request funding from Latrobe City. Printing quote from Pazzaz is \$60 for 200 or \$100 for 500 copies.

## Conservation Matters

Proposed housing development next to Edward Hunter Reserve – have been alerted to this by Cheryl Wragg of the Moe & District Residents Association (MODRA) who oppose this development, believing it will have a negative impact on the Reserve. Wendy has prepared draft letter raising concerns about increased water usage, domestic pets and weed problems.

Hancocks annual audit by Smartwood is to take place. Susy Zent will be having meetings on site with auditors and Jackie and Phil may be involved.

## NOTICE OF AGM 26 MARCH

Positions for re-election:

Secretary

Vice Presidents 2 and 3

Publicity Officer

## PHOTO COMPETITION

Check full details Jan-Feb 2010 Naturalist.

Entry form and set of labels available at GMs and excursions, or by mail from Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137,

email: [kennedyh@iinet.com.au](mailto:kennedyh@iinet.com.au)

## ILLUSTRATING A FIELD GUIDE FOR BIRDS. NOVEMBER 26, 2009

How does one find, observe and paint all birds of Australia? This is the question that Nic Day, bird illustrator of the well known Simpson and Day, "Field Guide to the Birds of Australia", tackled in his recent presentation to Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club members.

The Field Guide is now in preparation for its eighth edition. The preparation of illustrations for the first field guide back in the early 1980s was a mammoth task. Nic said it took him two years of working seven days a week. It represented thousands of hours of work. Later editions have been less time consuming with some new plates replacing older out of date plates and the text has been updated in the light of new information.

The creation of a page requires a lot of thought, compromise and negotiation between the creative team and the publishers. The publishers seem to have the last word since they have control of the purse strings. Decisions as to how many birds, their posture, should they be perched, in profile or in mid flight and so on all need to be made. The creative team comprises Ken Simpson as Editor, Nic Day as Illustrator and Peter Trusler as Art Director. Having an Art Director has been found to facilitate decisions as to what should be included in the field guide. Nic stressed that they are not trained scientists and that they follow the lead of experts as to what birds are called and also the number of species included.

The plates are designed so that the birds are not presented in serried ranks or as "mugshots". They are shown in postures and angles that the observer would see. The aim is to produce aesthetically pleasing ornithology. The birds are recognizable with the maximum information being conveyed with the least confusion for the bird watcher. Nic's sources for his work come from published photos, museum specimens, captive or injured birds and even road kill to provide measurements and anatomical details. He supplements this information with his own extensive field sketches, notes

and digital photographs. Digital photographs have the zoom function allowing him to blow up detail. Nic makes many quick sketches in the field to capture the jizz of a bird, to create a holistic impression of the bird's posture, shape, size, and feeding and foraging behaviour which cannot be conveyed by post mortem paintings. He has also found that the detailed study of one species has a spin off as it provides details for related species.

Nic likes to sketch a background to create a setting for his bird drawings. The plates in his books give testimony to this by the inclusion of habitat, twigs, grass and fungi etc. A coloured background softens the picture and can suggest habitat such as farmland, desert or water. It's easier on the eyes in the field than a stark white page.

In creating a plate Nic described some of his tricks of the trade. He uses a "cut and stick" method to arrange his birds attractively on the page allowing spaces for names and some description. He will then draw the design and apply it to the page using tracing paper to create a ghosted outline of the birds. He masks out the birds with latex and paints the background. After removing the latex he paints in the birds.

Nic displayed a number of brilliantly drawn plates and sketches to illustrate his techniques during the talk.

When asked about the eighth edition, due out next year. Nic said that he had completely repainted the Australian finch plates. He feels that with his extensive experience observing and painting birds, his later plates tend to be better designed and have more relevance to the bird watcher. Many of the maps showing bird distribution have been updated and behavioural descriptions take into account the latest birding knowledge. An additional 12 vagrant bird species will be included.

The field trip with Nic Day, the following day to Mathison Park and Morwell National Park ably led by Ken Harris was well attended with 28 members and friends present. Very few birds were seen on the lake at Mathison Park but an obliging family of Gang-gang Cockatoos in the eucalypts provided many photographic opportunities.

At Morwell National Park we had lunch and spent the afternoon walking along Billy's Creek and the Pipeline track. There were plenty of mozzies around which necessitated the liberal application of insect repellent. Amongst the several highlights here were observing the behaviour of a Grey Currawong subduing a rat which it had suspended by its tail from its beak. A White-naped Honeyeater with a large green grub was hopping around for more than five minutes in the Silver Wattle of the understorey providing us with excellent views. We had to wonder if its nest was nearby. Seeing Satin Flycatchers, male and female, at several points along the track was an added bonus.

Ken Savage

## SEANA CAMP OCTOBER 2010

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> to Monday morning 18<sup>th</sup>

Our club is hosting this event at Camp Rumbug, near Foster. Planning for excursions and speakers is well under way. Volunteers will be needed to assist with the actual running of the weekend, so please mark the dates in your diary now.

## PLEASE NOTE

**Subscriptions** for 2010-11 are now due. These remain unchanged from last year. For full details and payment form please see the inside back cover.

## MARCH 27 EXCURSION - LAKES NP

For car pooling meet 8.45am at carpark at corner of Princes Hwy and Whittakers Road, Traralgon (Mexican Restaurant). Otherwise meet at 10.30 at Loch Sport Public Hall in National Park Road. Driving time from Traralgon via Longford is about 75 minutes.

After arriving at Loch Sport turn right at each of two T-intersections beyond which the road curves left each time. The hall is on the right hand side of the road just past Echidna Street. It is a newish building 4.4 km from the blue Loch Sport town sign, and has plenty of parking at the side.

Bring lunch, water, insect repellent and don't forget slip, slop, slap. Toilets are available at the planned lunch spot.



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number has changed.

Full Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Private) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$38 ☐ Single \$29 ☐ Junior/Student \$22 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

**CHEQUE ENCLOSED \$** (Made payable to LVFNC Inc)

*Subscriptions are due on March 1<sup>st</sup> each year. (Half fees apply for those joining after 31<sup>st</sup> August)*

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APRIL 2010

Issue No. 530



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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## LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 23 April

Introduction to Fungi – Geoff Lay

Excursion: Saturday 24 April

Fungi at Tarra Bulga NP. Meet 10am at Visitors Centre carpark at Balook. For car pooling meet 9.15 at Mexican Restaurant carpark, Traralgon.

Bird Group:

Tuesday 4 May Caringal Scout Camp/Tyers River Bridge. Meet Tyers River Bridge picnic ground on Walhalla Rd 19km north of Moe by 9.30am. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 1 May – ferns at Mt Worth. Meet 10am at Moonlight creek carpark. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 28 May

Frogs – Ivor Graney

Excursion: Saturday 29 May

**Evening** frog excursion at Morwell River Wetlands. Meet **4.30pm** carpark on Strzelecki Hwy at wetlands gate (about 500m from intersection). Expect to finish 6.30pm.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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## FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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## FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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## SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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## FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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## HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

---

FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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## DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (MAY): 14 MAY 2010

Please Note: Subscriptions now due – full details see inside back cover

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

## TRAILING HOP-BUSH REFOUND

The Trailing Hop-bush – *Dodonea procumbens* is quite a rare plant occurring in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. According to the Flora of Victoria, it is limited to the east of the state, except for the statement “A 1900 record from near Sale in the east has not been confirmed by recent collections.”

At the start of November I was contacted by Megan Burns of Gippsland Water to say that while working in the bush areas of Dutson Downs she had discovered a thriving colony of this plant. She invited me to accompany her in a survey of this colony and bring any interested Field Nats along as well.

10<sup>th</sup> November was a hot, still, sunny day, so the mosquitoes were pretty active when 5 of us (myself, Bruce and Estelle Adams, John Topp and April Nutter) met Megan in Rosedale and headed for Dutson Downs.

We drove deep into the Dutson Downs area and Megan told us we had to walk 1km to reach the site. It was a bit more than 1km but we found some interesting plants on the way including the Spike Milkwort – *Comesperma calymega*, the Dwarf Bush-pea – *Pultenaea humilis* and the tiny sundew – *Drosera pygmaea* in flower.

The first plant we saw was just a leafy prostrate plant with small leaves with three teeth at the tip, but we quickly found a plant with a lot of typical *Dodonea* seed-

flowers which consisted of a long deep red style on top of a small ovary, were just past their prime. The seed capsules therefore were from the previous year's flowering. They contained nearly ripe seed, so the complete cycle from flowers to releasing seed must take a little over one year to complete.



Further searching revealed some male plants, also bearing this year's flowers, but also past their prime. The male flowers are



little more than a bunch of stamens.

We then got on with the job of counting the plants. We divided into 3 groups of 2 and counted plants along each of a group of adjacent tracks, counting all the plants on the tracks and as far as we could see them on the track edges. During this phase John and April located a small swamp area with a lot of plants and we all counted this swamp together and found 700 plants there.



capsules.

We soon found many more plants and I noticed that some plants had female flowers and nearly ripe capsules on the same plants. Close examination showed that the female



On the way back we counted a few more plants in another swampy area. The plants seem to grow in areas that are inundated for part of the year, although while we were there all these areas were pretty well dry.

When Megan added it all up at the end we had detected a total of 1997 *Dodoniaea procumbens* plants in an area where they hadn't been seen for 109 years

This discovery is not just of local significance. There is currently accessible on the internet, a Draft for Public Comment of a report titled: National Recovery Plan for the Trailing Hop-bush *Dodoniaea procumbens*. This report summarises all the known sites for the hop-bush in the three states (it even refers to the 1900 sighting near Sale) and it estimates the total Australian population as approximately 3000 plants, with the single largest population, being at Bear State Forest in western Victoria, which contains about 1000 plants. Megan's discovery converts a missing location to the most important site for this endangered species, with almost double the plants in the previous best site. Megan tells us there is also another site at Dutson Downs with more plants on it.

As well as being the largest number of plants, the Dutson Downs site may well be free of the major threats such as grazing that effect other populations. The biggest threat to the Dutson Downs population seems to me to be global warming, as the greatly reduced rainfall is tending to dry up so many of the swampy areas that the Trailing Hop-bush seems to favour.

We were all very pleased to be involved in documenting the status of this population of a very special and newly rediscovered plant.

Ken Harris

## OMEIO SUMMER CAMP 22-25 JAN 2010

**Friday & Saturday am.** Our Omeio summer camp started on Friday evening when we gathered in the late afternoon at the Oriental Claims Historic area to have our tea in the picnic area. As we were staying at various places around the town this was our meeting point to catch up and count heads. As it was still very hot, most people were not interested in walking too far, other than a short walk along the Ah Fong loop. The whole area had been completely worked over for its alluvial gold in the latter part of the 1800s, and

although the vegetation had regrown, the caves, cliffs and eroded gullies were a reminder of this upheaval. Weeds typical of disturbed goldmining areas were in plenty, such as Sweet Briar, Twiggy Mullein and broom.

Fortunately the next day was cooler, and our 25 participants assembled in the main street at 8.30 am to meet our leader for the day, Rick Box. Rick currently works for Parks Vic co-ordinating the English Broom eradication program and has lived in the area for many years. His local knowledge meant he could lead us to interesting spots where a good variety of plants could be found.

We drove north to Anglers Rest and stopped beside the road a few kilometres north of the Blue Duck Inn. There was ample parking on a side track and it was a pretty and peaceful spot, so those who tired of birdwatching or botanizing could sit and relax in the shade. We spent a couple of hours here as people spread out looking at birds and plants. Most plants had finished their spring flowering, but Omeio had recently had rain so they looked remarkably green and fresh for late January. The most conspicuous and ubiquitous flowers for the day were the golden buttons of the Clustered Everlasting *Chrysocephalum semipapposum*. The Pale-fruit Ballart *Exocarpus strictus* was also very widespread, and its fruit were ripening to a pale lilac colour. We walked up a hill and the track was lined with *Daviesia latifolia*. Quite a bit of time was spent identifying some other pea plants using their leaves and fruits. *Mirbelia oxyloboides* and *Bossiaea buxifolia* were both small plants with little leaves but the bossiaea's were round while the mirbelia's were narrow and in whorls. Two hypericums were found: our native *Hypericum granineum* and the introduced *H. perforatum*. Ken Harris had identified this in my Italian wildflower pictures recently and told me we should find plenty of it up here, which we did. I was interested when Ken pointed out a different centaury, *Centaurium tenuiflorum*, which has a more slender calyx and a deeper pink coloured flower than our common *C. erythraea*. There were lots of grasses growing in the stony ground, but the most prevalent one was Kangaroo grass *Themeda triandra*. We saw it all weekend and it was really conspicuous and attractive in full seed. Back at the cars was a healthy plant of *Convolvulus erubescens*, its pink flowers looking just like

the colour plate in Corrick and Fuhrer's Wildflowers of Victoria.

After morning tea in this lovely spot we drove a short distance up the road to a picnic spot on the Big River. I wanted to show Ken a plant I had identified on my visit in October when it was flowering, which chiefly grows in the mallee, but has a few occurrences in the east. It was *Bertya mitchelli*, a tall bush with narrow recurved leaves, green above and white tomentose beneath. Female and male flowers grow on separate plants and are quite unusual to look at, the males looking like tiny brushes with a ruff of petals.

The bird sightings for Friday and Saturday morning included Gang-gangs, white-winged Choughs, Common Bronzewing, Sacred Kingfisher, Satin Bowerbird and Rufous Songlark

Wendy Savage

**Saturday pm.** We went further up river to lunch at Joker Flat where there was more shade. We spread out along the bank above the river, then after eating people moved down to the river to paddle or investigate the plants. There were some attractive Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) plants in full flower as well as other swamp loving species – Austral Brooklime (*Graticola peruviana* and yes, it does occur in South America), *Cyperus lucidus* (Leafy Flat-sedge) with large showy red-brown inflorescences, *Geum* sp. with a similar fruit to *Acaena* to which it is closely related, three St John's Wort species, *Hypericum gramineum* and *H. japonicum* and the introduced one. A small *Juncus* sp. and *Persicaria aqua-piper*, also grew close to the river. We scrambled back up the river bank to examine what was on top. The vegetation was open and dry and we tentatively identified *Pomaderris aspera* which is supposed to be in wet and shaded forests. The Flora of Victoria says in the Omeo area, plants have broader less wrinkled leaves. A small *Pimelea* with yellow flowers which we eventually decided was either a Curved, Matted or Shubby Riceflower (see Galbraith's *Pimelea* 22 and 23).

An Azure Kingfisher and Red Browed Finch were spotted further upstream and Fergus saw a platypus!

**Alpine NP.** Ten minutes drive from the river lunch spot we entered the National Park. The

vegetation here was very different – a tall fairly dense forest with an understorey of shrubs and low growing ground species. We were on a south facing relatively gentle slope and compared to what we had driven through (steep, sun exposed slopes with skeletal soil and vegetation), it was lush. Small granite boulders protruded here and there.\* There were two Eucalypt species, one smooth barked, possibly *E. globulus*, and the other a box bark species. *Daviesia latifolia* (Hop Bitter-pea) and *Exocarpus strictus* (Pale-fruit Ballart) together with a small amount of English Broom formed the understorey, while the ground cover include a quite a number of species including *Platylobium formosum*, the Pale Vanilla Lily (*Athropodium milleflorum*), the tiny *Poranthora microphyllum* (or as Bon calls it 'the little plant with big name') *Dianella tasmanica*, *Hibbertia obtusifolia*, an epacrid with pink berries (?*Cyathodes*), a Hyacinth orchid, *Wahlenbergia stricta*, *Lomandra longifolia* and *L. filiformis*, a *Lobelia ?gibbosa*, and *Oreomyrrhis ?eriopoda* (Australian Caraway). At the bottom of the slope we found Mother Shield-fern (*Polystichum proliferum*). Those of us looking up saw a Yellow Robin and Striated Thornbill.

\*Granite is an igneous rock which has solidified three or more kilometers below the earth's surface. Because it cools very slowly it forms large crystals, mainly of quartz, feldspar and mica. The black crystals seen in granite are black mica but there is also a clear mica which when found in large sheets, was used in old style toasters. The feldspars and micas break down relatively quickly when exposed to the atmosphere and when not washed away, form a fertile soil with nutrient minerals as was the case at this locality. Where the slope is steep, the nutrient minerals are washed away, leaving only the heavier quartz grains producing a sand-based impoverished soil.

**Pinball Rapids.** On our journey home, we scrambled up the bank above the road to look at the Omeo Grevillea (*G. willisii*), a green/yellow flowered species endemic to this area on granite. Also present was *Banksia canei* (Mountain Banksia), which as the Flora of Victoria says is 'found on dry, rocky ridges' as was certainly the case! Another dry area species present was the Coarse Dodder-laurel *Cassytha melantha* and *Acacia obliquinerva* (Mountain Hickory Wattle) which is not

confined to dry areas but was also growing quite happily.

Our final stop, to look at a waterfall, had us climbing down granite boulders to view the falls. On the far side of the gorge, English Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) grew on all but the steepest part of the slope. A line of dead broom showed the extent Rick Box and his workers had managed to spray this noxious weed which is endangering native vegetation and was seen in nearly all the localities visited today.

Jackie Tims

**Sunday.** On Sunday our main destination was the high country around Mt Hotham, but on the way we visited the Victoria Falls Historic Area. First we had a look at the remains of an early hydraulic power station that had supplied power for a goldmine at Cassilis some distance south. Only the foundations remained but information boards told the history. A dam holding water for the power station had lasted only about 6 months before succumbing to a flood that broke the dam wall.

Although most vegetation in this area was past the flowering stage, one plant still in flower was a Dusky Scurf-pea, *Cullen microcephalum*. It has a rather tall flower stem with a tight spike of purple flowers close to the top.

We also stopped near Victoria Falls and did a short walk to a lookout point, noting some interesting plants along the way. There was a low-growing pea with very small leaves like box - Matted Bossiaea, *B. buxifolia*. It had elongated seed-pods on longish peduncles. And there was also a small Mint-bush, *Prostanthera phyllifolia*.

Next we headed up to the snow country near Mt Hotham. At JB Plain we parked amongst some Snow Gums, which were looking attractive with their smooth bark and spreading leafy branches. From there we were able to wander beyond the Snow Gums out onto the spongy peat-bog plain where there was a wonderland of wildflowers in bloom, mainly annuals and perennials. Out on the plain there were two types of Bluebells - Tall Bluebell, *W. stricta* and another, possibly Waxy Bluebell, *W. ceracea*, both flowering nicely. The former had colonies of upright

stems with a flower on each, apparently all from one root.

There were also many daisies scattered amongst the tussocks, including Orange Billy-buttons, *Craspedia aurantia*, and at least two types of *Brachyscome*. One was the Field Daisy, *B. decipiens*, with pale mauve flowers, and the other Tufted Daisy, *B. scapiger*, with a basal tuft of fairly long narrow leaves. Also lots of Yam Daisies, which hang their heads at the bud stage.

Under the Snow Gums at the edge of the plain the vegetation was a little different. The striking, purplish Royal Bluebells, *Wahlenbergia gloriosa*, were scattered amongst the grass. There was also a small daisy-bush with umbels of very small white flowers, Alpine Everlasting, *Ozothamnus alpinus*.

The last stop was a bit beyond Mt Hotham Village and we went for a walk towards Mt Loch. The vegetation here was generally quite low, but not far away one could see many skeletons of Snow Gums that had been badly burnt in a bush-fire.

The low vegetation included many Everlasting Daisies and *Brachyscomes*. One of the more noticeable daisies was the Orange Everlasting, *Bracteantha subundulata* which has slightly sharp-tipped petal-like bracts around its 'flower'. There was also the Bogong Daisy-bush, *Olearia frostii*, which has a pale mauve flower above pale, hairy foliage. Other daisies included the Hoary Sunray, *Leucochrysum albicans*, which had yellow 'petals' around its orange centre, and also the Button Everlasting, *Helichrysum scorpioides* which has a large orange button above the soft hairy stems and leaves. A small Daisy-bush, apparently adapting to the harsh winter conditions was the Scaly Everlasting, *Ozothamnus hookerii*. It has very small, stem clasping leaves and very small white flowers.

There was also a colony of Alpine Mauve Leek Orchids, *Prasophyllum alpestre*, the same orchid some of us saw at Mt St Gwinnear the previous weekend. The local Kunzea, *K. muelleri* was very short, only a few centimetres high and its yellow bottlebrush flowers were tending to hide amongst the foliage.

After the hot weather on Friday when driving to Omeo, it was good to visit the high plains

on what seemed like a pleasant spring day and find so many attractive plants in flower.

Ron Carey

**Monday.** After a fruitless search to the west (I think) of Omeo, to find the Omeo Gum (*Eucalyptus neglecta*), our convoy headed back down the Great Alpine Road to the turn-off to Bindri. This road follows the Tambo River which we eventually crossed to take the narrow winding road to Mt Nugong (1,482m). Most of the drive was on the north-east face where passengers could look down the nearly vertical side of the mountain. (Thank goodness there were no logging trucks!) It was hot and the sparse, scrawny thick barked eucalypts looked as if they had only a tenuous hold on the rocks and life itself. After what seemed an interminable length of time we reached the top, crossed to the other side of the ridge into tall Alpine Ash (*E. delegatensis*) forest and fog in less than a couple of minutes! Fern gullies to the right of us had Southern Sassafras (*Atherosperma moschatum*) growing among the tree ferns. Ken Harris spotted *Gaultheria aspera* (Waxberry) from the car. This species was the only member of the Ericaceae family in Victoria although I understand that the Epacridaceae (Heath) family has now been subsumed into the Ericaceae (where it was originally anyway).

We reached the heritage listed Washington Winch, imported from Seattle, USA in the 1920s. Originally used in WA Karri forests, it was bought by the Victorian Forests Commission after the 1939 fires to salvage fire killed timber and later sold to a Swifts Creek timber cutter who used it until 1961. Two spar trees lifted the logs of the ground. The spars today are of replacement timber.

A few kilometers further along the road we came to Bentley plain. We lunched outside a hut and watched 20+ Needletails (or Spine-tailed Swifts) swooping over eucalypts about 300 m away across a grassy patch. The eucalypts were flowering we subsequently learnt and the birds were no doubt feasting on the attendant insects. Some of us then set off to do a short walk through the forest. I could only spend 30 minutes before setting off home but Ken and others spent a longer time. Ken recorded 78 species for the Washington Winch/Bentley Plain area which considering most time was spent driving, is quite an achievement. *Podolepis robusta* (Alpine Podolepis) I remember, as it was a daisy we

had not seen on the previous days, as well as Cascade Everlasting (*Ozothamnus secundiflorus*), Mountain Pepper (*Tasmannia lanceolata*), Ray Blechnum (*Blechnum fluviatile*) and Turquoise Berry (*Dryophila cyanocarpa*), which is related to asparagus. From Ken's list and a Bairnsdale Field Naturalist list, it is clear Bentley's Plain requires another visit for a much longer perusal. Its flora was very different to the other habitats seen on this camp.

Thank you to Ken Harris for the plant list and to Margaret Regan (Bairnsdale FNC) for her notes on BFNC's trip to the same area but in reverse. The list and Margaret's write-up (much more extensive than what is written here), is available from me. Thank you too, to Wendy Savage for organising such a great trip.

Jackie Tims

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 22.3.2010

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 23 April:** Fungi – Geoff Lay

**Saturday 24 April:** Fungi Excursion to Tarra Bulga NP. Meet 10am Visitors Centre carpark at Balook. Car pooling meet 9.15 carpark at Mexican Restaurant, Traralgon.

**Friday 28 May:** Frogs – Ivor Graney

**Saturday 29 May:** Frog excursion at Morwell River wetlands. Meet 4.30pm at carpark on Strzelecki Hwy at wetlands gate (about 500m from intersection). Expect to finish 6.30pm. Contact Kevin Jones for permission.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 1 May – ferns at Mt Worth. Meet 10am Moonlight Creek carpark. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 4 May – Caringal Scout Camp/Tyers River Bridge. Meet Tyers River Bridge picnic ground on Walhalla Rd, 19km north of Moe, by 9.30. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$377.22. Investment A/c \$11,922.25.

### Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence

SEANA camp progress – account has been opened. Phil advertised at Ballarat camp, encouraging attendees to stay at Camp Rumbug. Need to get first circular out late April. Meet 7 April, Phil and Wendy will have draft ready.



Club History progress – went through first draft and Phil has produced the second draft ready for checking. David S has quotes from LV Printers for an A4 48 page booklet for 200, 300 or 350 copies for variations on black & white or colour options. Motion: Plan to print 250 copies, colour cover, rest black & white and sell to club members and camp participants for a nominal price. David S to get second price from Pazzaz Printers. P Rayment/D Mules.

Eric Lubcke Reserve – reply from Simon Clark indicating some maintenance will take place soon and other items to be submitted for next year's budget. They seem to have lost the text we sent for signage so will send again.

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations – chocolate mud cake ordered for AGM.

SEANA Ballarat camp – 4 members attended; 93 participants. Well run with booklet provided with excursions and convoy details. SEANA committee changes with President and Secretary retiring. New Pres Dick Southcombe, VP Noel Schleiger, Treasurer retiring next year. Angair running autumn camp 25-28 Mar 2011.

AGM planning – Pos vacant: Sec, VP 2&3, Publicity Officer. Penny Johns, co-author of book *Where to Find Birds in Victoria* is coming for 10 min talk publicizing the book.

Secretary away for April BM and GM. If Ken Smith not available, Alix will stand in.

Photographic competition – judges will be Mary Austin, Graeme Hancock, possibly David McPhee. Ken H has written to Traralgon Art society clarifying dates of exhibition. He will arrange committee meeting end of April.

Laser pointer not working so David S will replace it.

Naturalist – have more members so should print 100. Gill will ask for new quote. Will welcome new members in Naturalist – David Mules will pass details to Gill.

Club badges – ask next month if any members would like to purchase one.

## Conservation Matters

Recreational Use in Parks – comment sought, but found out too late to respond. Club was not contacted, although other groups were. Jackie will write suggesting we be included in future.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR APRIL

Geoff Lay. Most Australian plants are dependent on fungi to survive. Geoff will explain simply how fungi live and why they are essential to the environment. He will illustrate the various types of fungi with many digital

images. Geoff has been a keen bushwalker with a camera for over 40 years and a long standing member of the Australian Plants Society. He does volunteer work at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR MAY

Ivor Graney is a Life Member of the Portland FNC having received his Life Membership in March this year for his services to the Club and to natural history in general. He has always had an interest in nature from a very early age but his specific interest in frogs began around 1991-2 when the Frogwatch scheme began with a request to naturalists to provide information as to whether frog numbers had declined. He decided that in order to make any sort of judgement one needed to know what frogs inhabited an area and so he combined his interest in photography with learning about the frog species of the SW of Victoria. This resulted in the development of his non-scientific illustrated frog presentation which has been enjoyed by naturalists and non-naturalists across the state. He has also photographed frogs from other areas including Central Australia, the Kimberley and Queensland but his comprehensive presentation deals mainly with the frogs of SW Vic and includes information on their life-cycle, habitat requirements, and predators.

(Note: most of these frogs are also found in this area – Wendy)

## PHOTO COMPETITION

Check full details p4 Jan-Feb 2010 Naturalist.

Entry form and set of labels available at GMs and excursions, or by mail from Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137, email: [kennedyh@iinet.com.au](mailto:kennedyh@iinet.com.au)

## FOR THE DIARY

### Burning for Biodiversity Information Night

11 May - 6-9pm - DSE Office - 71 Hotham Street, Traralgon – Supper provided

Presentations will discuss projects involving fuel reduction burning for biodiversity, including:

- Fire recovery and Ecology
- Flora and Fauna Monitoring
- Ecological Assessments

Case Study: Wilson's Promontory

Guest Speaker: Wendy Wright, School of Applied Sciences and Engineering, Monash University

Field Day: 23 May – 1-5pm – full details available at Information Night

Contact: Peter West ☎ 5172 2111

**PLEASE NOTE: SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE**

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number has changed.

Full Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Private) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$38 ☐ Single \$29 ☐ Junior/Student \$22 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

CHEQUE ENCLOSED \$ (Made payable to LVFNC Inc)

Subscriptions are due on March 1<sup>st</sup> each year. (Half fees apply for those joining after 31<sup>st</sup> August)



**LATROBE VALLEY NATURALIST**

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SURFACE  
MAIL

MAY 2010

Issue No. 531



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 28 May

Excursion: Saturday 29 May

Frogs – Ivor Graney

**Evening** frog excursion at Morwell River Wetlands. Meet **4.30pm** carpark on Strzelecki Hwy at wetlands gate (about 500m from intersection). Expect to finish 6.30pm.

Bird Group:

Tuesday 1 June Traralgon Reserves. Meet by 9.30am TRRCR carpark in Hickox St, Traralgon. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 5 June – Hibbertias and learning terms used in their identification at Ron Carey's, 332 Normanby St, Warragul, 10am. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 25 June

Excursion: Saturday 26 June

Fauna in Fragments & Revegetn. Areas – Peter Homan

Related excursion to Witts Gully (Hernes Oak fire dam). Meet 10am at track off Maretts Rd, just past the Gun Club. Take Hernes Oak exit from Princes Hwy left into Maretts Rd, track is about 200m on RHS.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

---

FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

---

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

---

FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

---

FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

---

HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (JUNE): 11 JUNE 2010**

**Please Note: Subscriptions are now overdue – full details see inside back cover**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

## BIRD OF PARADISE FLY

The Field Outing in February was an exploration of the geology in the vicinity of Digger Island near Cape Liptrap.



When I was returning from the beach to the cars, I discovered a strange animal on a stem of a small Allocasuarina shrub.

I was surprised to find it, but I knew at once what it was, because I had seen the same species only 2 weeks earlier during a plant survey on Wilson's Promontory.



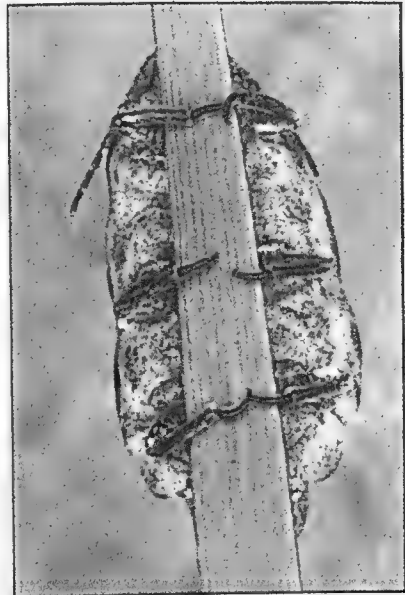
The first one I saw was larger and greyer and was sitting on a vertical leaf of a Dune Sword-sedge —

*Leptospermum concavum*.

It was a grey leathery lump, but close examination showed that it was clinging to the leaf with six legs. I thought at first it was some sort of beetle larva. When I looked even closer, I saw that it had well developed antennae that suggested it must be an adult, so I then thought it was a flightless adult female of a moth or some other insect.

I tried hard to find out what it was when I got home, but it wasn't until I visited the Victoria Museum in Melbourne that I discovered its identity.

It proves to have the unlikely name of Bird of Paradise Fly with the scientific name of *Callipappus rubiginosus*. It is not a fly at all, but belongs to the bugs, the Hemiptera. It was originally classified as a Mealybug in the Coccidae, but is now placed in a small family of its own, the Callipappidae. The common name comes from the male, which looks like a large fly with extended tail plumes like a bird of paradise.



The larvae of this species feed underground on roots. The host plant is not known, but could possibly be Banksia. When the female is ready to emerge as an adult, she makes her way to the surface and climbs any convenient vertical object. She has no mouth parts, so cannot feed. She simply waits for a male to be attracted to her pheromones. Her eggs hatch in a marsupial pouch at her rear and the tiny crawlers drop to the ground and start feeding underground.

I think that the female near Digger Island had probably already laid her eggs and maybe even hatched her young as she seemed shrunken and wrinkled compared with the earlier one at the Prom.

After writing this, the Fields Nats visited Sperm Whale Head near Loch Sport for our March outing and on a hill top, we found two more adult female *Callipappus rubiginosus*. This time they were on a woody shrub and rather higher off the ground, 1.5 metres. They were dry and

withered and had perhaps expired after releasing their larvae, but were still easily recognised.

Specimens I saw in the museum were collected in the Otways.

It is interesting to speculate as to how a species like this whose females never travel more than a few metres can possibly be dispersed as widely as to range from the Otways to Cape Liptrap and to Wilson's Promontory and then to Sperm Whale Head. I am unable to come up with any mechanism to explain it, but this and several moths with flightless females do nevertheless manage to spread over quite large areas.

Ken Harris

## SEANA AUTUMN CAMP AT BALLARAT

The Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat (FNCB) hosted the SEANA Autumn Camp over the extended weekend of 19-22 March 2010, graced with mild sunny weather. Activities for the 93 registrants were based at Pax Hill Scout Camp/ Activity Centre in a pleasant elevated bushland setting on the south-eastern fringe of the city. Although bunkhouse accommodation was available on site, many folk opted for extra comfort in nearby motels or caravan parks. A spacious meeting room at Pax Hill catered well for evening meetings and talks, dinners and suppers.

The Friday evening welcome included short presentations on local flora and fauna by FNCB members. Their club has recently published *Wattles of Ballarat*, which was available for purchase.

The SEANA AGM and general meeting were held on Saturday evening after dinner, and were followed by a forum in which member clubs gave 2 minute presentations of highlights and issues. One common thread was the challenge of attracting new members: in my LVFNC segment I stressed the importance of good publicity via website and local media for attracting visitors/potential new members to presentations by interesting speakers. In raising SEANA's role, John Gregurke, SEANA secretary, mentioned moves to establish a new club in the western suburbs of Melbourne and to reactivate the Horsham FNC. Some seeding

funding may be provided by SEANA to assist with formation of new clubs – e.g. to assist with costs of initial public meetings.

On Sunday evening, Ern Perkins, Castlemaine FNC member and Australian Natural History Medallist for 2008, spoke on the subject of Monitoring Change in Natural Ecosystems. He comprehensively overviewed the monitoring activity in the Castlemaine area involving:

- bird surveys of selected sites repeated across time, some using the standard 2 hectare/ 20 minute counts;
- photo-point records – photos of selected sites over time;
- detailed sequential recordings of all plants in fixed quadrats, typically of 20 metres square area;
- plant surveys in matched pairs of quadrats, one burnt and one unburnt, to assess the impact of fire on plants.

Ern noted that the keeping of adequate records associated with this work involves considerable effort and planning.

The bird survey work has already yielded useful data on changes in bird species assemblages over time. Ern's sobering conclusion from their plant surveys in fire-impacted sites was that, in general, so-called "ecological" burns in Box-Ironbark forests under drought conditions result in catastrophic species loss.

Turning to the excursions program, thirteen different excursions plus some repeats were offered over the three days including Monday morning. Given the time of year, the focus was on geology and significant plantings, along with grasslands and bird sites.

On Saturday morning, geologist Peter D'Auvergne gave a brilliant introduction to the geology and gold history of Ballarat via short visits to a number of key sites around the city chosen to illustrate the processes which brought the gold to the region. We started at the summit of Black Hill, a short distance to the north-east of the city centre.



Here Peter explained how the goldfields originated in the sandstones, siltstones and mudstones deposited in deep marine conditions some 400-600 million years ago. The gold is associated with veins of quartz which were intruded into these ancient rocks after they had been uplifted, squeezed, folded and fractured. The first discoveries of gold in places such as Ballarat were in stream sediments – this alluvial gold had been carried by running water from weathered profiles in bedrock. Sometimes alluvial deposits were buried by lava flows from volcanic activity over the past six million years - these deposits are known as “deep leads”. Peter explained that these deep leads could often be richer in gold than the surface quartz. To reach the gold contained in these old buried rivers, shafts had to be sunk through the hard basalt capping. Large quantities of timber were needed to prop the shafts and power steam engines, leading to rapid destruction of the area’s forests. This, along with competition for scarce resources of materials and manpower, hastened the demise of gold mining around the time of the First World War of 1914-1918.

From Black Hill, with its good view of the topography of the city area, we progressed to the Gong Gong Reservoir, constructed early last century using material from the mullock heaps resulting from the mining. Here we could see surface granite and basalt – rock associated with the process of concentrating gold. In a cutting above the reservoir, Peter showed us a remarkably clear example of the layers created as molten basalt “cooked” the 600 million years old sedimentary sandstones and slates beneath it.

At the next site, the Norman Street road cutting, we viewed tilted and broken layers of Ordovician sandstones and mudstones. We could see quartz and iron bearing minerals concentrated immediately below a fold point, clearly illustrating what Peter had explained to us earlier.

Our final stop in a fascinating excursion was at a remnant of a pump house in West Ballarat, at the head of a deep mineshaft which would have accessed a deep lead and quartz veins beneath it. The remnant displays the great skills of the Cornish bricklayers.

On Saturday afternoon, your correspondent experienced a totally different excursion, to Sawpit Gully, the historic site of plantations established by pioneer forester John La Gerche in the 1880’s. This site, with towering trees including pines, oaks and cedars along with wattles and eucalypts, is located near Creswick; leader Greg Binns (FNCB member) explained that it is on the National Estate register. La Gerche, born in 1845 on the English Channel island of Jersey, is honoured as a pioneer of forestry who worked indefatigably to reduce forest destruction and revegetate the foothills and gullies laid bare as a consequence of gold mining. We walked the La Gerche Track, a circuit walk through the Sawpit Gully Plantation. Two exotic pines of interest were the Black Pine, *Pinus nigra*, and the Western Yellow Pine, *Pinus ponderosa*, with thin sheets of colourful bark closely resembling jigsaw pieces.

On Sunday, I opted to join a full-day excursion to the mineral springs of the Daylesford/ Hepburn Springs area, completely new to me. As well as sampling at least seven different springs at Deep Creek, Tipperary, Lake Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and Spargo Creek, we visited The Blowhole, a river diversion associated with gold prospecting, and the wonderful Botanical Gardens at Wombat Hill in Daylesford. Slightly offbeat for a field naturalists excursion, but a most enjoyable blend of heritage and surface geology.

Congratulations to FNCB for hosting a well organized, interesting and friendly autumn camp.

Philip Rayment

## DIGGER ISLAND EXCURSION 27.2.10

Access to this part of the coastline south of Walkerville South was via private property. Beside the farm dam was a large flock of Wood Duck, a pair of Mountain Ducks and a swan, while in the distance over the Coastal Reserve flew a small flock of Black Cockatoos. On the shoreline was a White-faced Heron and some Black-faced Cormorants, while out to sea were Gannets and Short-tailed Shearwaters. Just behind the beach Ralph found Firetails. At the northernmost extremity of our beach walk

one of the pair of White-bellied Sea Eagles did a magnificent fly around.

On the descent through the narrow strip of Cape Liptrap Coastal Reserve from the property boundary to the beach Terri Allen identified 95 plant species in the coastal woodland and dune and cliff vegetation. The dominant vegetation consisted of Coast Tea-tree, Messmate, banksias, at least two She-oak species and Prickly Geebung. In the damp gully was Rambling Coral Fern and both Rough and Soft Tree Ferns. Amongst the many sedges and grasses were Weeping Grass, Wallaby Grass, Common Tussock Grass and Streaked Arrow Grass. Of special interest were Thyme Spurge, Sea Celery, Autumn Bird Orchids in flower and Hyacinth Orchids. There were numerous butterflies. Ken Harris intends to provide a separate article on his special find – a Bird of Paradise Fly. (*He has! See page 1 – Ed*)

The track took us past the upper level of the Hughes brothers' lime kiln which is bigger and much better preserved than those at Walkerville South. Our host Elizabeth Landy explained how limestone from Bell Point was broken up and transported in skips to the hill top above the kiln and poured down a chute into the upturned bottle shaped kiln. Some chunks of limestone still remained in the chute. Layers of timber from adjoining land was alternated with layers of limestone in the kiln so that the heat from the burning wood drove carbon dioxide from the limestone to produce lime. After lunch Elizabeth led us to the lower level of the kiln where the lime was removed from the kiln and showed us the route through the foreshore to the jetty where a few remaining piles are still evident alongside Digger Island. Digger Island is really a high vegetated rock stack which is an island only at high tide.

The falling tide left sandy pools beside some of the larger rocks. One rock was covered with mussels and barnacles, and near the water level it was dotted with Red Waratah sea anemones. The pool beside it sheltered two other species of sea anemone, and soldier crabs wandered on the damp sandy flats around it. As the tide fell further clusters of cunjevoi were exposed along the outer edges of the rock platforms.

Shallower water off rock stacks such as Digger Island and little rocky outcrops cause waves to slow near the rocks and so bend in behind the rocks from both sides. So on the inland side of the rocks the two sets of waves pass through each other causing some of the sediment they carry to be deposited often building up this section of the beach a bit higher than adjacent sections. The bending of the waves can lead to zones of increased wave intensity behind the rocky protuberances which frequently is where most wave erosion occurs.



*Digger Island* Photo: Margaret Rowe

From the northernmost extremity of the excursion altered basalt (or greenstone) formed as under sea extrusion of lavas and tuffs of Cambrian age could be seen. This rock is geologically continuous with the greenstones seen on the shoreline south of Bird Rock at the end of the February 2009 excursion. It is however deeply cut with many small faults and fractures, leaving numerous 2 -3 metre high ravines and tiny bays along this shoreline.

Just a little to the south for a few tens of metres are a spectacular variety of rocks with a green tinge due to the formation of serpentine. This has resulted from hydrothermal action on the rocks along a major fault. The fault marks a sudden transition from greenstone to the Digger Island Limestones to the east. Just to the south is a cave through the small headland where fracture planes extend down to the intertidal zone allowing wave action access to erode the cave.

At the base of the cliff just to the south west of Digger Island is a spectacular, highly unusual greenish rock called serpentinised

gabbro. Gabbro is a plutonic igneous rock, having cooled slowly deep underground and solidified to form large "basic" minerals such as plagioclase, pyroxene and olivine. In terms of mineral composition gabbro is the coarse grained, slow cooled equivalent of basalt. Small pods of gabbro have intruded the greenstones and Digger Island Limestones along the fault. The serpentinisation is chemical modification of pyroxenes and olivines to form the mineral serpentine which contains magnesium, silicon, oxygen and hydroxide.

About half way between there and Bell Point is another cave in the brown, yellowy Digger Island Limestones, but this time it is a high, elongated cave extending back into the cliff. Just outside the cave opening the finely layered limestone is greatly contorted, probably due to another major fault which separates these rocks abruptly from the dark grey Bell Point Limestone to the east. The Bell Point Limestone is similar to the dark grey Bluff member of the Waratah Limestone Series at Walkerville North. Bell Point Limestone contains fossils of shells, corals, and possibly stromatolites.

From the southernmost extremity of our beach walk a tantalising view of Mushroom Rock and beyond is just possible. Mushroom Rock has a basal notch caused by wave erosion between the high and low tide levels where (as at Digger Island) the wave erosion intensity is stronger just behind the headland. At the far end of the bay beyond, more yellowish Digger Island material outcrops and beyond that the greenstone reappears and continues beyond Bear Gully nearly to Point Grinder.

Graeme Rowe.

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 19.4.2010

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 28 May:** Frogs – Ivor Graney

**Saturday 29 May:** Frog excursion at Morwell River wetlands. Meet 4.30pm carpark on Strzelecki Hwy at wetlands gate (about 500m from intersection). Expect to finish 6.30pm.

**Friday 25 June:** Fauna in Fragments & Revegetation Areas – Peter Homan

**Saturday 26 June:** Related excursion to Witts Gully (Hernes Oak fire dam). Meet 10am at track off Maretts Rd, just after the Gun Club. Take Hernes Oak exit from Princes Hwy left into Maretts Rd, track is about 200m on RHS.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 5 June – Hibbertias, and learning terms used in their identification. Meet 10am at Ron Carey's, 332 Normanby St, Warragul. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 1 June – Traralgon Reserves. Meet by 9.30 at TRRCR carpark in Hickox St. TRU wetlands survey Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$447.72. Investment A/c \$10,500.25.

### Business Arising, General Business & Correspondence

SEANA camp progress – Phil to finalize first notice. 19 proposed excursion alternatives, leaders being organized. Copies to be emailed to all clubs and members with email addresses. A/c opened – EFT option available/electronic submission of forms. Need commitment from club members to help at camp, list at GM.

Club History progress – second draft done, will wait for Wendy at next meeting to discuss.

Photographic competition – judges being finalized. Remind members entries close 30 June.

Laser pointer not fully resolved, David S still testing.

Naturalist – now printing 100.

Supper box – still need someone to take over from Lorna. Ask at GM.

Name badges – list at GM for members who want one, cost \$6.50.

Grand Strzelecki Track – Ken Harris tabled info on this to start at Billys Creek (Junction Rd) in MNP and finish at Tarra Bulga NP, total 85km; existing tracks plus approx 21km of new tracks; 3 campsites, and 3 loops around Balook area.

Alix discussed Andrew Silcocks, Birds Australia survey results. Article in AP newsletter about bird group's trip to their

wetlands. Martin O'Brien DSE re data use from bird surveys for Bird Atlas.

Email from Lisa Phelan re bird survey at her property in Hazelwood North - David M to organize time.

## Conservation Matters

Nothing to report.

## Notes From the General Meeting 23.4.10

John Poppins raised concerns about the salvage logging activities in the Marysville area following the fires causing disturbance to seed beds and water catchment problems.

A suggestion re the supper box – perhaps the rostered supper duty members could collect it and bring it to the next meeting.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR JUNE

**Peter Homan** has been a member of FNCV for 44 years, and a lecturer in Conservation and Land Management with RMIT University, Holmesglen TAFE and Northern Melbourne TAFE. He is fauna consultant to DSE, Parks Vic, Municipalities, Corporations, Landcare groups, Land for Wildlife properties etc. Peter specialises in field surveys of small mammals (including bats), reptiles, frogs and birds. His talk will follow the article that was published in the Victorian Naturalist, ie. it will cover the surveys of the offset areas around the Yallourn coalmine and the Morwell River Wetlands.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

A reminder that entries close on 30 June.

Entries will only be accepted from current members of the LVFNC and all pictures must be taken in Australia, its territories or the surrounding oceans.

We are offering 10 sections and entrants may submit up to 2 pictures in each of the 10 sections, making a maximum of 20 pictures per entrant.

The 10 sections are designated as:

- i Trees
- ii Flowering Shrubs
- iii Wildflowers (non-shrubby plants)
- iv Orchids
- v Ferns, Mosses and Liverworts
- vi Fungi (incl Lichens & Slime Moulds)
- vii Birds
- viii Mammals, Reptiles and Amphibians
- ix Insects Spiders and other invertebrates

x Landscapes and natural formations, including fire effects

We are not in a position to offer any prizes, but certificates will be awarded to the winners in each section and one picture will be selected as the overall winner.

Pictures will be submitted as prints and any size from 4" x 6" up to A4 8" x 12" will be accepted. We are also asking where possible for equivalent digital images to help us in compiling a powerpoint display for use at the SEANA Camp in October.

Entry form (with all conditions of entry and relevant information on the back) and set of labels available at GMs and excursions, or by mail, from Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137, email: [kennedyh@inet.com.au](mailto:kennedyh@inet.com.au)

## LEECHES

Leeches can be removed by applying vinegar, burning them off or applying salt. However, if a leech attaches to an eyeball or in the ear or mouth, great care is required to remove it. For the eye or ear, apply a saline solution (1/2 teaspoon salt to 1 cup water) until the leech detaches itself. For the mouth use saline as a rinse. **Add salt to your first aid kit.**

Prevention is the best protection. In known leech areas, cover up and check yourself at each rest stop. To prevent or slow bleeding, use a Band Aid and a liberal coating of Vaseline.

Adapted from VicWalk News 2002

## CLUB'S 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

At the AGM on 26 March, we celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Club's inauguration in 1960. Pictured below is Life Member Lorna Long cutting the cake, surrounded by some of the current committee.



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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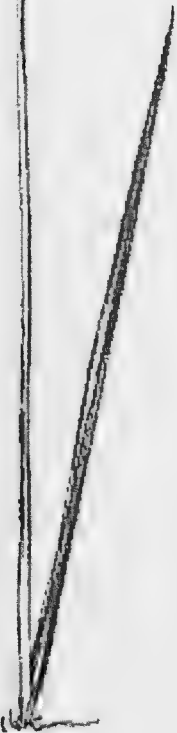
JUNE 2010

Issue No. 532



# *Latrobe Valley*

## *Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 25 June  
Excursion: Saturday 26 June

Fauna in Fragments & Revegetn Areas – Peter Homan  
**Please note change:** Related excursion to TRU Yallourn Wetlands. Meet 10am at Morwell Bridge gate, on first Morwell exit from Princes Hwy (north side), before the railway overpass.

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Tuesday 6 July Wirilda/Crinigan Rd Reserve. Meet by 9.30am at carpark at Wirilda. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 3 July – Mosses at Jackie Tims', "Lapoinya", 679 Yarragon South Rd, Yarragon South, 10am. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 23 July  
Excursion: Saturday 24 July

Simpson Desert Camel Walk – Graham Duell  
Gippsland Water Factory visit – details TBA.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE  
Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

---

FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (JULY): 9 JULY 2010**  
**Please Note: Subscriptions are now overdue – full details see inside back cover**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

## PRESIDENTS REPORT 2009 - 2010

This year is going to be the most important year in the Clubs history because we will be celebrating the Club's 50<sup>th</sup> year. It is a remarkable achievement that we have not just survived but are thriving during a period when so many Clubs are finding it difficult to continue. We all need to congratulate ourselves because the Club is only as successful as the members' involvement. Your attendance at our meetings and excursions and your contributions are a significant factor in our success. Perhaps the most important factor is the commitment of our committee. They do an enormous amount of work behind the scenes and I would like to acknowledge their work and pay tribute to their dedication to the Club.

To celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary the Club has decided to undertake three major projects this year and we have established sub-committees to manage each of them.

Firstly we will be hosting the SEANA camp at Camp Rumbug in October 2010. Planning for the camp is progressing well with a program and speakers well advanced. We hope to see as many Club members as possible attending the Camp which will have some interesting sites to visit and topics to listen to. As we get closer to the long weekend we will be looking for some volunteers to help us manage the large number of people we expect will be attending from all over Victoria.

Secondly the preparation of the Club History booklet is well advanced and we hope to have the booklet ready in time for the camp. I would like to particularly acknowledge the work that two of our members have put in to the preparation of the booklet. Phil has virtually written the booklet single handedly and Wendy has provided valuable feedback. I'm sure that you will all be impressed with the final result.

Thirdly the Club will be holding a photographic exhibition to coincide with our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the SEANA Camp. This has been effectively managed by Ken Harris and I am looking forward to seeing the result. However its success is going to depend on your contributions and your involvement and I would like to see all our

photographers participating in this competition.

Much of the planning for these events occurred in recent months so now I would like to review some statistics for last year. Our attendances were consistent but marginally lower last year with the average attendance at our monthly meetings at 31.5 (last year was 32.7) and excursions 20 (last year was 22). I would encourage you all to continue to attend our meetings and excursions and we welcome new members.

Our magazine the 'Latrobe Valley Naturalist' still maintains its excellent quality thanks contributions of our members and to the diligence of our long standing editor Gill. We also should acknowledge the contributions of our members who spend considerable time in the preparation of these written reports on our presentations and excursions.

In spite of the planning processes taking up a lot of our time the Club has maintained its high standard and diversity of the presentations at our regular monthly meetings. This year we had topics covering botany, ornithology, entomology, mammals and reptiles as well as other related topics including landscape design with Alan Noy and Mark Bradbury and the Southern Ark Project with Andy Murray – a very comprehensive cross section of natural history topics for our monthly meetings. Our botanical topics included Cathy Powers' talk on Plants and Pollinators and Ken Harris's talk on the Holey Plains Flora and Fauna. We also heard from Rolf Willig on Bandicoots, Peter Marriott's talk on Moths and Sid Cook's demonstrative presentation on Snakes. We had the privilege of listening to Nic Day talking on his Bird Illustrations and an interesting talk on the Wader Conservation in Delaware Bay in the USA by Susan Taylor. The other non local talk was given by me on the Birds and Mammals of the Arctic summarising a trip I did to Svalbard in 2008.

We were able to visit a wide selection of local reserves throughout the year including some new ones. The new ones included a geological excursion looking at the complex geology at Walkerville led by Graeme Rowe

and to Trafalgar Water Trust. Other local reserves we are more familiar with included Morwell National Park, Mount Worth State Park, Sale Wetlands, Bunyip State Park, Holey Plains State Park and Mathison Park.

The Club's Spring Camp was held at Camp Munjara on the shore of Lake Glenmaggie. We were able to explore an area north of Licola along the Wellington River where we found a number of unusual plants that required a lot of research by Ken Harris to identify. The summer camp was held at Omeo where we stayed at a number of accommodations around the town. We were fortunate to be led by Rick Box from Parks Victoria on Saturday who showed us a number of interesting spots in the Alpine National Park. We are grateful to Rick for extending his local knowledge we were able to find a good variety of plants. On Sunday we were able to explore some of the high country around Mount Hotham. We were also able to visit some interesting historical sites around Victoria Falls.

I would finally like to thank all the committee members for their continued support throughout the year. I was pleased that Wendy has renominated as the Club's secretary after a record number of years in this position. Also thanks to Lorna for renominating as Vice President 1 and Phil as Vice President 2 and Alix as Publicity Officer. Also I am pleased to welcome Ken Smith who has volunteered to fill the position of Assistant Secretary. This year will be the most important year in the history of the Club and I will look forward to a successful celebratory year.

David Stickney

## TALK AT MARCH 2010 AGM

Our speaker at the March LVFNC Inc. meeting was David Stickney. Our president's topic here was 'Birds and Mammals of Antarctica and the Subantarctic Islands'. By way of comparison the treatment given contrasted to a previous talk given by David on wild life of the Arctic region. Whereas the Arctic has no land mass the Antarctic has a huge land mass (1.5 times area of Australia and up to x3 times in winter due to ice pack) Antarctica has no land mammals as found in the Arctic like

Bear, Fox and Deer. Instead Antarctica has an abundance of flightless birds, indeed many (eight +) species of Penguins live and breed there and on surrounding islands sometimes in colonies of tens of thousands or more. Many Seal species comprising ear-tufted (sea lions and fur seals) and the more common (Elephant, Crabeater, Leopard and Weddell) that make up the earless seal variety, however the 3rd member of the seal family - the toothed Walrus is not found in Antarctic waters.

The Antarctic Southern Ocean marine environment is enormously rich in nutriment and hence much food, which can easily support vast numbers of creatures along with many visiting, whales. The convergence (mixing) of cold Antarctic waters with warmer temperate waters affects temperature, pressure and salinity of the land continent and surrounding ocean. Temperatures generally found at latitudes above 40 deg. south are 10+ degrees cooler. With matching water current and surface winds the wild life here has adapted well to this pattern of circulation in contrast to the North-South mode as is found in Arctic regions.

Bird life here is quite prolific with some 14 flying species to be found on the Antarctic continent and many scores more that inhabit the 30 odd subantarctic islands. Of particular note are the many species of Albatross that live and breed here with some spending up to 2 years living continuously at sea. This bird is unique in being able to soar into thermals and so fully utilise the winds that blow around Antarctica - roaring forties / furious fifties / screaming sixties. Many other bird species like Gulls, Petrels, Terns, Prions and Skuas are also found here.

David has travelled twice to Antarctica - once to and around the continent during 2007 and again in 2008 to most subantarctic islands travelling via New Zealand and South America. David's colour images of these trips were shown and these are outstanding in both their quality and wide diversity of subject matter. Thank you, David!

Lawrie Waddington

## INSECTS IN THE GARDEN

### Spider - February

All our nature observations take place in our small garden these days.

Never-the-less we often discover interesting happenings. Lately we have been entertained by the activities of a garden spider. At least we think that is what it is. We think it belongs to the Argiopidae and within that to the Araneus. Its web is approximately 25cm in diameter and is so fine that it is difficult to see if it does not have the sun shining on it or dew drops. It is constructed across a path we use daily and attached from the shrubbery to the wall. It is just outside the kitchen window above the sink, giving us a good view.

The web is usually about head high and we are able to bend under it but if it is any lower we have to detach it from the wall to fall back against the shrubbery where we think the spider is hiding, or if we forget it and we break it. The web has been there for at least 10 days. Every night, except for the wet nights, the spider repairs or rebuilds the web. We have had a display of it wrapping its prey and later in the day eating the prey.

### Case Moths - February

We have had an infestation of case moths. We think they are Saunders Case Moth by the way the twigs are arranged on the silk case and by the size. Last year we had about eight big case moths on the timber of the carport. We let them be and even put them on bushes when we found them on the floor in the middle of the carport.

We now feel this may have been a mistake. Recently we discovered lots of little case moths on some of our bushes. On one Alogyné I did a quick count of over 50 and on the adjacent white Buddleja there were even more than that. There are a few on several other bushes in the vicinity. The size of the case moths is from 1cm to about 5cm at present. The smaller ones have the silk case covered with pieces of leaves which have curled as they dry and make the whole very attractive. The larger ones have already two or three twigs attached. The branches that the case moths are on are much denuded of leaves - we hope the plants will survive.

After about a week we found that the larger ones were moving as we found quite a few on the ground. Later we had to remove any case moths still on the plant to give it a chance to recover from the attack.

Bon Thompson

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 25.5.2010

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 25 June:** Fauna in Fragments & Revegetation Areas – Peter Homan

**Saturday 26 June:** Please note change from previous information. Related excursion to TRU Yallourn Wetlands. Meet 10am at the Morwell Bridge gate, off first Morwell exit from Princes Hwy (north side), before the railway overpass.

**Friday 23 July;** Simpson Desert Camel Walk – Graham Duell

**Saturday 24 July:** Gippsland Water Factory Visit. Details not available yet.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 3 July – Mosses at Jackie Tims', 679 Yarragon South Rd, Yarragon South at 10am. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 6 July – Wirilda/Crinigan Rd. Meet by 9.30 at carpark at Wirilda. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$849.82. Investment A/c \$11922.25.

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

SEANA camp progress – electronic copies of camp details and registration form sent to names on supplied data base and hard copies sent to clubs – 240 in total. Deadline for applications July 16. More volunteers needed. Ask at GM.

Club History progress – quotes for 200 copies black and white book with colour cover, LV Printers \$1694, Pazzaz Printers \$793; should get 250-300 copies. Meeting Tuesday 8 June, 3pm at Phil's.

Laser pointer – David S bought a new one.

Photographic competition meeting 7 May – presentation and opening Sunday 12

September at 2pm. Need one more judge, with suggestions from meeting to be followed up. Expenses include backing cards for photos, hall hire, catalogue printing, certificates and lunch for judges before opening. Volunteers needed for exhibition. Ask at GM.

Supper box – no volunteers, so may have to consider not having supper until position is filled.

Name badges have been purchased for members at \$6 by Lorna.

PA system – some complaints that speaker couldn't be heard, so make sure microphone is placed correctly.

Birds of the Latrobe Region brochure has been produced by Alix with 500 copies printed by Latrobe City Council. They will be placed in libraries, tourist venues, council offices, etc. and used for club monitoring. Golden Gully Road block being investigated as possible field naturalists' site. Alix wrote publicity article for Link magazine re birding, club, website etc.

Grand Strzelecki Track – Ken Harris is on the steering committee. Preliminary native vegetation assessment being done, and track construction will be put out to tender.

Bird group members did a survey at Lisa Phelan's property in Hazelwood North.

## Conservation Matters

International Power Hazelwood supplied reports on the successful translocation of platypus and native fish from a section of the Morwell River being closed to the new river diversion.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR JULY

**Graham Duell** for three weeks in August was part of an ecological survey along part of the Warburton River floodplain on Kalamurina Station, a 1.7 million acre property recently acquired by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy. The Station has environmental significance, in that it links the Simpson Desert and Lake Eyre National Parks and now forms part of the world's largest conservation zones, an area larger than Tasmania. The ecological survey was conducted by 'Australian Desert

Expeditions' and included 2 botanists, 1 zoologist, 5 crew, and 12 paying 'guests' who helped the scientists with plant specimen collection, scat collection, bird identification, and general help.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

### A reminder that entries close on 30 June.

Entries will only be accepted from current members of the LVFNC and all pictures must be taken in Australia, its territories or the surrounding oceans.

We are offering 10 sections and entrants may submit up to 2 pictures in each of the 10 sections, making a maximum of 20 pictures per entrant.

The 10 sections are designated as:

- i Trees
- ii Flowering Shrubs
- iii Wildflowers (non-shrubby plants)
- iv Orchids
- v Ferns, Mosses and Liverworts
- vi Fungi (including Lichens and Slime Moulds)
- vii Birds
- viii Mammals, Reptiles and Amphibians
- ix Insects Spiders and other invertebrates
- x Landscapes and natural formations, including fire effects

We are not in a position to offer any prizes, but certificates will be awarded to the winners in each section and one picture will be selected as the overall winner.

### Timetable:

Nov/Dec 2009	Issue of Entry Forms
1 January 2010	Start of entry period
30 June 2010	Entries close
Sat 11 Sept 2010	Judging
Sat 11 Sept 2010	Presentation of awards
12-22 Sept 2010	Display in Traralgon
15-18 Oct 2010	Display at SEANA Camp

Pictures will be submitted as prints and any size from 4" x 6" up to A4 8" x 12" will be accepted. We are also asking where possible for equivalent digital images to help us in compiling a powerpoint display for use at the SEANA Camp in October.

Entry form (with all conditions of entry and relevant information on the back) and set of labels available at GMs and excursions, or by mail, from Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137, email: [kennedyh@iinet.com.au](mailto:kennedyh@iinet.com.au)



The following article was taken from *Monash Memo* of 31.3.2010

## T-REX WAS HERE 100 MILLION YEARS AGO

Monash University palaeontologists are part of a team of international scientists who have discovered evidence that ancestors of one of the largest carnivores to ever have roamed the earth existed in the Southern Hemisphere.

Fossilised remains of a hip bone belonging to a tyrannosaur - an ancestor of *Tyrannosaurus rex* - were found at Dinosaur Cove in south-west Victoria by Monash University's chair in palaeontology Professor Pat Rich and Dr Tom Rich, an honorary researcher in the School of Geosciences and senior curator of Vertebrate Palaeontology at Museum Victoria.

It's the first time scientists have found evidence to prove that tyrannosaur dinosaurs existed in Australia and lays to rest the belief held by some scientists that tyrannosaurs never made it to the southern continents.

"The existence of this tyrannosaur hip bone shows that about 100 million years ago - in the Early Cretaceous period - small tyrannosaurs were found in other parts of the world. This discovery changes our understanding of the evolution of this group of dinosaurs," Dr Tom Rich said.

Measuring about 30 cm in length, the pubis bone looks like a rod with two expanded ends. One end is flattened and connects to the hip while the other is shaped like a boot.

Compared with *Tyrannosaurus rex*, which lived about 70 million years ago at the end of the Cretaceous period, the newly-identified dinosaur was about one-third its size and lived earlier during the Cretaceous, around 110 million years ago.

The research team believes the bone would have come from an animal about three metres long and weighing around 80 kilograms, similar to a human, and would have had the large head and small arms that make tyrannosaurs so distinctive.

The find sheds new light on the evolutionary history of this group of dinosaurs. It also

raises the crucial question of why it was only in the north that tyrannosaurs evolved into the giant predators like T-rex.

## FROGS OF SOUTH WESTERN VICTORIA - IVOR GRANAY

It was a real treat to be part of the 50 strong audience to see the superb slides that Ivor presented during his talk on the south western region frogs. There are nine species in all, seven of which are common in the Latrobe Valley.

Ivor has quite a novel approach when trying to photograph frogs. He travels the roads in his local area one hour after dark on wet nights listening for calling frogs. Only the males call. The frogs cease calling when approached so Ivor tapes their calls from a distance. He identifies their general location and approaches quickly. When the frogs cease calling he plays the tape causing the frogs to start the calling competition again. As a result he is able to locate and observe the frog.

Frogs are able to change their colour to blend in with their surroundings, so colour is not a feature used to identify frogs. A greenish coloured frog found in the grass can change to a whitish colour when held in a white container. Interestingly, when males are calling their mouth is closed and it is their vocal sac vibrating in the water making their characteristic carrying sound.

Ivor went on to explain the characteristic features of each of the species.

There are two broad groups of Victorian frogs: Tree frogs which have pads on their fingers and Southern frogs which do not.

The Common Spadefoot Toad, *Neobatrachus sudelli*, not found in the Latrobe Valley, has a vertical pupil and a distinctive black tubercle on the foot. It is about 50mm long and is well adapted to burrowing as its name suggests.

Ewings Tree Frog, *Litoria ewingi*, a common species with a brown stripe through the eye, finger pads. It is about 50mm long and lays its eggs on submerged vegetation. Its call is a series of rapid pulsing notes, "creeee creeee creeee creeee creeee".

The Growling Grass Frog, *Litoria raniformis*, is a greenish tree frog. It lives near permanent water and has a distinctive ear and brownish blotches on its back. It is about 75 mm long and is active by day (often seen sunbaking) and it preys on other frogs. Its call is a growl "crwark crwark crok crok".

The Spotted Marsh Frog, *Lymnodynastes tasmaniensis*, is spotted, as its name suggests, about 50mm long and has no finger pads. This widespread frog has a distinctive reddish stripe along the middle of its back. Its call is a single short sharp "plock".

The Common Froglet, *Crinia signifera*, has no pads and is about 30mm long. It is widespread and multicoloured with back ridges. Its call is a characteristic ratchet or cricket like sound.

The Pobblebonk or Banjo Frog, *Lymnodynastes dumereli*, is a widespread, long lived frog, about 75 mm long with prominent glands on the face and hind legs. Its belly is smooth and variegated in colour. Its call is a resonant "bonk" repeated every few seconds.

The Striped Marsh Frog, *Lymnodynastes peroni*, is large frog which is difficult to hold and it is a strong jumper. They range from brown to golden brown with dark longitudinal stripes along its back. Its call is a single soft "tock"

Southern Smooth Toadlet, *Geocrinia laevis*, occurs in the south west of Victoria and the Victorian Smooth Froglet, *Geocrinia victoriana*, occurs in the Latrobe Valley. These have different calls but both are about 30mm long and have a pink colouration around the groin.

Ivor concluded his presentation with pictures with cleverly synchronised frog calls.

A lively question time ensued.

## Field Trip

We had a record 33 members and friends attending our field trip to the Morwell Wetlands the following evening where we had a brief talk on the Wetlands by Kevin Jones, International Power Hazelwood's Environmental Officer while a Brown falcon

watched on from a nearby dead branch. Despite much searching and listening our frog list was small and all were identified by call during that hour after dark.

The Common Froglet and Ewings Tree Frog were heard in large numbers while the Spotted Marsh Frog and Whistling Tree Frog, *Litoria verreauxi*, were only heard briefly by a few members. If the weather had been wet as anticipated, the children who attended hoping to see frogs would probably have seen them jumping along the tracks.

Ken Savage

## FOR THE DIARY

**SEANA Spring Camp at Camp Rumbug 15-18 October.** The first circular has been sent out. We still need lots of volunteers to help with the running of the event, especially excursion facilitators.

**Closing Date for Photo Competition is 30 June.** See page 4.

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

As Phil and I are heading off overseas for the last week of June and the whole of July the July Naturalist will obviously not be done by me. However any communications can still be emailed to my address – the temporary editor will have access. Please send lots of articles, at the moment there is nothing in the kitty.

*Arthropodium strictum* (Chocolate lily)  
Photo: Vanessa Craigie



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

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JULY 2010

Issue No. 533



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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 23 July

Simpson Desert Camel Walk – Graham Duell

Excursion: Saturday 24 July

Ollerton Avenue & Edward Hunter. Meet Matlock St (off Ollerton Ave) 10 am, then lunch at Botanic Gardens Moe. Edwards Hunter Reserve in the afternoon.

Bird Group:

Tuesday 3 August Mt Worth SP. Meet by 9.30am at Moonlight Creek carpark. TRU survey Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>, meet by 9.30am at Morwell Bridge gate. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 31 July – Bunyip State Park. Meet 10am at the Labys', 235 Main Neerim Rd, Drouin. Bring lunch. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 27 August

Wildlife Parasites – Greg Gordon

Excursion: Saturday 28 August

Wildlife Parasites Workshop – details not yet available

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (AUGUST): 13 AUGUST 2010**

**Please Note: Subscriptions are now overdue and memberships not paid will be cancelled**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>



## TOXICITY IN PLANTS & BUSH TUCKER

Having been raised on a dairy farm, we were made aware early that some plants were toxic to cows. Examples are fresh shoots on a crop we commonly called sacchaline (a sugar cane like plant that is very sweet when mature) or young couch-grass both of which produce a poison (picric acid) and clover where too much can cause excess gas (methane) and give bloat. Many seeds have toxic chemicals too eg the bitter taste of almonds and apricot seeds is due to cyanide.

Other forms of toxic plants are ferns especially bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*) however these are generally not consumed by cows but if they do get a taste for it, it can give sickness and death.

After those early years, my education took me away from the farm into industrial and analytical chemistry. In the subject organic chemistry there was a topic called natural products and we learned the formulae and structures of many molecules like sucrose, cholesterol and plant extracts such as  $\alpha$ - and  $\beta$ -pinene.

I was fascinated when the lecturer said many of our medicines were discovered by chemists who foraged through jungles looking for unusual plants. They would take a leaf or a flower, crush it in their hands, sniff it and taste it. If the plant was aromatic or bitter, then it was considered an alkaloid and samples would be taken back to the laboratory for analysis.

In those days, chemists had little in the way of instrumental techniques thus a lot of careful detective work in test tubes was needed to isolate the alkaloid, study its properties and propose a structure or formula. Tests would be done to determine potency and medicinal properties. Potential uses were often helped by knowledge of local indigenous culture and practice. Some herbal remedies go back a long way, derivatives of aspirin as an extract from bark were used by Egyptians for headaches.

Cycad bread is appreciated by many folk for its flavour and texture. On a recent trip to Mt Isa we made a list of 50 native plants used by indigenous people. One wonders at the cost paid in human life as their culinary skills were developed.

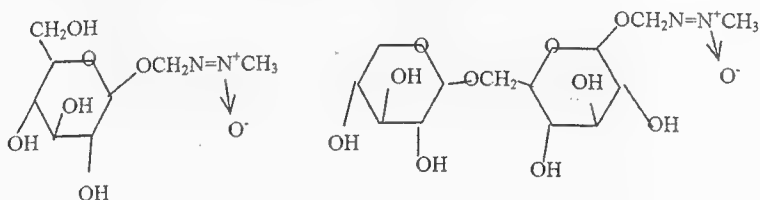
For more information see a book entitled 'Cycads of Australia' by Ken Hill & Roy Osborne, Kangaroo Press, 2001 (ISBN 0 7318

0886X). We also have a videotape of a documentary titled "Guam Disease" recorded some 15 years ago where the side effects of this toxicity from eating improperly prepared Cycad seeds were examined. In Guam the locals used chooks to determine if the seeds were properly detoxified. However, **dementia** was the main topic of this documentary. An anthropologist noted Guam had a high incidence of this debilitating disease and wondered if it was related to their consumption of Cycad seeds (and perhaps inferior detoxification).

The same link with Cycads was also found in Japan and New Guinea when untreated seed pulp was used for medication. It was found that if a person survived the acute phase of just one poisoning episode, then 20 years later they had severe dementia and this was particularly sad for those affected as young as 25.

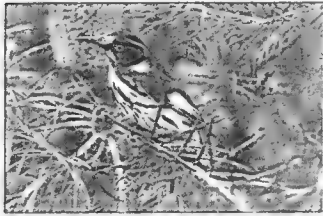
Bush tucker might be nice to try, but with Cycads you have to know what you are doing. My mind has now come round to think more about cows again and in particular 'Mad-cow disease'. Is that similar to the 'zamia staggers'? Did the cows eat some sort of toxic plant like a bracken type fern? Are other forms of human dementia like Alzheimers due to some acute poisoning event 20 or so years before? Are sub-acute levels of exposure accumulative? What went into that last Oriental dish I had? What happened to those chemists who crushed up plant leaves and flowers to taste and see if alkaloids were present? We now know that 'Mad-hatters' disease got its name from hat makers centuries ago who used mercury to smooth down felt hats and in due course suffered from mercury poisoning (a heavy metal that affects the brain).

For those interested in the chemistry, the toxic substances in Cycads and Macrozamia are called Cycasin and Macrozamin:-



Ray Hodges

## **"BIRDS OF THE LATROBE REGION"** (as prepared for Latrobe City Council 'LINK')



"Are you familiar with the bird in the picture?" asked Alix Williams, the Bird Recording Officer for the Latrobe Valley

Field Naturalists Club. "It is a New Holland Honeyeater, one of the most common honeyeaters found in the Latrobe region. Little groups of these birds can be seen and heard feeding on the flowers of many native plants in home gardens, parks and in the bush."

"Most people are aware of birds in their area and don't need to know what they are called to take pleasure in watching them. However some people like to learn more about the birds; their names, habitats, food and habits and changes in the local population numbers" Alix said.

One such group is the LV Field Naturalists Club who have regularly been observing birds and participating in surveys in the region since 1964. The Club, with the support of the Latrobe City, has recently produced a pamphlet containing a bird list for locals and visitors to the Latrobe region that provides details of species and the likelihood of sightings in the area. The pamphlet titled "Birds of the Latrobe Region" will act as a supplement to the "Nature of Latrobe" booklet that the Club produced in 2007. The free pamphlet is available at local Council centres, libraries, tourist information centres and from the Club.

"We have listed the 197 species of birds that have been seen in the region over the last ten years. As well as the LVFNC monthly excursions on a Saturday the Club Bird Group has a monthly midweek bird observing day. We visit local parks and patches of bush as well as several sites owned by private companies and utilities. This enables us to see more species and greater numbers of birds than private individuals can." Alix explained.

"To assist in detecting environmental change the Bird Group surveys some areas on a

quarterly basis and, once a year since 1998, we have participated in the annual Australia-wide Bird Challenge Count. In early December, members and friends count not just the number of species but the number of each species seen in a 40km radius around the Valley. In 2009, an amazing 4978 birds of 121 species were recorded – in just one day!" Alix added.

The main aim of our group is to enjoy getting together, out in a patch of bush or wetland, with like-minded individuals and to learn from each other about birds.

For further information, enquires and assistance with birding questions our email address is on the LVFNC website <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>, post a note to PO Box 1205, Morwell 3840 or phone 5127 3393 or 5634 2246.

Alix Williams

The following article is taken from "Monash Memo" of 4.11.2009

Professor McNally is in the School of Biological Sciences at Monash University.

### **STUDY REVEALS DRAMATIC DECLINE IN BIRD NUMBERS**

A 15-year study across northern and central Victoria has shown that about two-thirds of bird species – including lorikeets, pardalotes, thornbills and honeyeaters – have declined dramatically in distribution and numbers.

A team of researchers, including ecologists from the Monash Australian Centre for Biodiversity systematically monitored woodland bird populations at 560 sites in a 30,000 square kilometre area from St Arnaud to Chiltern, mostly in box and ironbark forests.

"Most worrying is that species thought to be secure, the red wattlebird, striated pardalote, grey shrike-thrush and musk lorikeet, have declined as much as or more than species already of conservation concern – those listed as threatened, vulnerable or endangered, such as the crested bellbird, black-chinned honeyeater and crested shrike-tit," Professor Ralph Mac Nally said.

"Many species were encountered 60 per cent less often in surveys, and their abundances were down by at least 40 per cent. "Professor Mac Nally said climate change and the provision of food such as nectar, insects and seeds had compounded the already serious effects of broad-scale habitat loss and fragmentation in the region since the 19th century. "The region has been largely cleared and the remaining woodlands poorly managed over many decades, so that the system was vulnerable to effects of climate change and the severe drying we have seen since 1996," Professor Mac Nally said.

"There also seems to be much less breeding and lower breeding success in the past few years in remnant vegetation. We think that the recent plunge in numbers reflects a longer period of breeding failure, so that when adults die, there are few young to replace them," Professor Mac Nally said.

However, the research team reported some positives. They found more breeding in relatively young replanted sites, especially on more fertile soils, suggesting that widespread replanting may be part of the solution to reversing the decline.

The following article by Jackie Tims is taken from the July 2007 issue of *Latrobe City Link*.

### FIRST LAND ANIMAL CAN STILL AROUSE SCIENTIFIC EXCITEMENT

Most people are aware of millipedes from their garden – shiny black or dark grey – scurrying to get back to a dark, damp place out of the light and harm from predators. If you have watched them closely, you will have seen their tiny legs, each leg slightly out of step with the one in front so that waves appear to move along the length of their bodies. While centipedes have one pair of legs on each segment, millipedes have two pairs except on the first four segments where there is one.

Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist, Jackie Tims, said garden millipedes are introduced species and known as Portuguese millipedes, scientific name *Ommatoiulus moreleti*. "I counted 47 segments on a garden millipede

so they must have 180 legs," Jackie confirmed.

Jackie said that in general, millipedes feed on rotting vegetation, although a small number do attack crops. "Millipedes have been found as fossils up to 400 million years old, so they appeared on land soon after plants did. One fossil, of about 350 million year age, is of millipede footprints. It was estimated that they belonged to an animal up to some centimetres in diameter and 1.8 metres long! Some overseas species are poisonous, using various chemicals including cyanide. Plagues of millipedes have caused the train service to be cancelled on the Adelaide to Melbourne line when millipedes invaded the tracks and train wheels would spin on the steeper grades of the Adelaide Hills.

Portuguese millipedes are not the only species in Gippsland. Victoria has six native groups of millipedes, one of them is known as the Polydesmida. Tasmanian millipede expert Dr Bob Mesibov has found many of this group in Tasmanian tall wet or damp forests and he reasoned that they must be in similar forests in Victoria. At the Melbourne Museum he found a millipede collected in 1890 'from near Trafalgar'. It was light beige with orangey brown markings in colour and about 15mm long. Bob knew it was related to those in Tasmania. He spent 18 months looking for the millipede in the wet forests of Gippsland finding other related species but not the Trafalgar one."

Jackie said that after a broadcast on a local radio station appealing for owners of remnant bushland within a 12 km radius of Trafalgar, he finally found the missing millipede at Yarragon South. "If you read scientific papers everything is spoken about in matter of fact terms and there is no indication of the excitement a discovery such as this engenders. I came across Dr Bob a few minutes after his finding and the grin on his face did not disappear for hours. Very sober restrained scientists have been known to do little dances at such moments," Jackie revealed.

"This millipede, now named by Bob as *Lissodesmus johnsi*, was later found at the Uralla Reserve, a 'Trust for Nature' property

near Trafalgar. In a scientific paper Dr Bob described ten new species of *Lissodesmus* in Victoria, four from Gippsland – *L. dignomontis*, *L. gippslandicus*, *L. tarrabulga* and *L. johnsi*. *Lissodesmus* species are found in Victorian forests which receive more than 800 mm average rainfall. They live and feed in well rotted eucalyptus logs or in accumulation of peaty matter within the log. In such an environment they are well protected from fire but no doubt Lyrebirds find them in their scratchings.

“Why so much fuss about such insignificant animals? For a start millipedes are part of the system of breaking down and recycling dead organic matter for re-use by living plants and animals. For us, millipedes are not only sharers of this planet and entitled to their place but have been proved to be indicators of the ecological health of forests throughout Australia. Dr Bob and a colleague have a grant from the Federal Government to study Australian millipedes for the purpose of preserving the healthiest forests.” Jackie concluded.

### BIRD TALES

Looking out my kitchen window a few weeks ago my attention was captured by the antics of an immature Grey Butcherbird. It was standing in the grass and every minute or so it pounced on something, picked it up, shook it vigorously, dropped it and then repeated the process about 6 times before finally flying into a tree where it proceeded to swallow its' prey. With the binoculars I could see the poor creature it was playing 'cat and mouse' with was a small skink. I have never seen them behaving in this manner before.

The following event happened quiet a while ago but it's still interesting. It's 11.30. Seeing something unusual in the neighbouring paddock I collected my binoculars to identify a peregrine falcon standing on a dark lump tearing feathers out. It continued feeding for about 40 minutes and then flew away. Off course I then went to investigate and was surprised to discover the remains of an ibis. I was even more surprised when a short time later a wedge tailed eagle landed to feed. It didn't get much of a go as the peregrine flew in at a

great rate and proceeded to hassle the eagle continually until it took off. This event was repeated twice before the eagle gave up and flew away for good. The peregrine rested in a nearby tree keeping an eye on its dinner until dusk when it flew down and cleaned up what was left. The next morning all that remained was a few feathers and bones.

Julie Parker

### 2009 SPRING CAMP EXCURSION

- north of Licola and along the Tamboritha Rd beside the Wellington River on Saturday 10 October 2009

A superb sunny day greeted participants in the car park of Camp Munjara. After carpooling we passed the unusually full-to-overflowing Lake Glenmaggie before winding our way up to Licola general store. This was a convenient spot to buy snacks, stretch our legs, visit and admire the architect designed park buildings and look at the dramatic photos from the 06-07 fires and subsequent floods which were displayed in a small shelter.

Although unplanned our next stop was near Hicky creek as a painted quail had been spotted by those in the leading car. It proved to be a great place for both the birdos and those interested in observing the plant diversity. Although I don't think the painted quail was seen again but many of us were enjoyed watching the antics of a Wee Bill. Beside the road numerous native plants were found and examined. While some discussed whether the groundcover without flowers or pods was a *Desmodium* or *Glycine*, John Topp effortlessly identified the flowering *Leucochrysum albicans* (Hoary Sunray) and the locally common *Hibbertia obustifolia* (Grey Guinea-flower) with its grey obtuse leaves.

As a passenger I was fully able to appreciate the views and glorious wildflowers growing on the roadside and cuttings.

Muttonwood camp was our next stop and well worth the trip. As Ken Harris and I had noticed the stunning wildflower display opposite the turnoff we skipped morning tea to explore it. It was fabulous as many of the plants were in full bloom. I particularly enjoyed the *Daviesia*, 'Leopard orchids,

*Tetralthea* (Pink-bells), *Platylobium* and many other genera. Ken and I spent a long time photographing and appreciating the beauty and wonderful diversity. After about an hour we were feeling guilty that the rest of the group were not enjoying it too so we left and persuaded them to come out of the 'weedy' camp ground and enjoy the display over the road. Unfortunately my photos were unable to capture the outstanding beauty and diversity.

I was particularly impressed by the combination of downy *Brunonia* (Blue Pincushion) and furry *Plaintain* leaves covering significant patches of ground. One day I hope to create and enjoy my own wildflower display in my garden.

Lunch was enjoyed with the gurgling river nearby before checking out the riparian area and its native treasures that have survived despite the pressures of campers, weed invasions fire and flood.

A bit further along the road John Topp lead us to population of *Banksia canei* that was growing on a dry rocky ridge some of which appeared to have been missed by the fire. Despite the lack of soil there were numerous white-pink orchids, *Bracteloma* (Daphne Heath), *Leucopogon* (Common Beard-heath), *Lissanthe* (Peach Heath) and a *Dillwynia*. While others discussed the identity of each plant I enjoyed peaceful atmosphere, views, cool breeze and sounds of running water.

Driving back the afternoon sun made it clear how little soil and organic matter existed on these exposed rocky hillsides. I wonder if it has been that way for long or was it mostly due to the drought, fires and closely following heavy rainfall.

With Ken Harris in the leading car we headed back stopping occasionally to check out unfamiliar plants and interesting things we could spot on the roadside. Stopping by the Wellington river we looked at; a big clump of *Pimelia*, interesting geology, the river, a large bank of brilliant purple *Prostanthera* flowers and delicate yellow *Pomaderris velutina* (Velvet Pomaderris).

Just before we called it a day Wendy lead us to some greenhood orchids (possibly

*P.cucullata*) that she had helped Rangers survey in 1992. Despite the very thick plant growth on the flood plain several were found and noted by a passing Ranger who also was interested in the roadside common ruddy-hood.

Thanks to John Topp for suggesting the fabulous location and showing us some of its botanical gems and to the drivers who enabled the passengers to relax and enjoy the scenery.

Jenny Porter

## MORE ON FIRE ECOLOGY

In the latter part of last year a few LV Field Nats who are also members of Earls Road Landcare Group were invited to talk hosted by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority given by Dr Kevin Tolhurst. Dr Tolhurst was present in the fire emergency centre with the CFA, DSE and Emergency Services on Black Saturday and predicted the destruction of Marysville, including the time that the fire would reach the town, with the computer program he constructed. Dr Tolhurst is a Fire Ecologist.

His talk ranged over fire behaviour, spotting, vaporisation of gases, how fire creates its own weather, how when two fires combine the sum of their energy is greater than their parts, fire speed increase with increase of slope (it doubles with each 10 degree increase in slope) and how to protect house and buildings.

His recommendations on houses are very much in line with those of Dr Greg Moore. He suggests that if you live on a west or north facing slope, then you plant an orchard down the slope from your house. The trees will act as an ember filter. Have a non-flammable path at least 1.5 metres wide round your house and no garden beds against the house. Use 'non-fluffy' mulch (ie non-burnable or with no airspaces to encourage fire on the garden beds close to the house). Unlike the CFA, he does not believe in a lawn as he says there is too much dead grass at the height of summer but does believe in green low flammable shrubs with no dead material in them to further catch embers or slow the fire.



If you have the opportunity to hear him speak, Dr Tolhurst has some very interesting observations on fire behaviour and consequences.

Jackie Tims

## **REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 21.6.2010**

### **General Meetings & Excursions**

**Friday 23 July:** Simpson Desert Camel Walk – Graham Duell

**Saturday 24 July:** *Please note change from previous information.* Ollerton Avenue & Edward Hunter. Meet Matlock St (off Ollerton Ave) 10 am, then lunch at Botanic Gardens Moe. Edwards Hunter Reserve in the afternoon.

**Friday 27 August:** Wildlife Parasites – Greg Gordon

**Saturday 28 August:** Wildlife Parasites Workshop. Details not available as yet

**Botany Group:** Saturday 31 July – Bunyip SP. Meet 10am at the Labys', 235 Main Neerim Rd, Drouin. Bring lunch. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 3 August – Mt Worth SP. Meet by 9.30 at Moonlight Creek carpark/picnic area. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$849.82. Investment A/c. \$11,922.25

### **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

SEANA campout progress. Registrations being received at present.

Club History progress. Meeting held where final draft checked. Wendy will incorporate photos into layout for publication.

Photo competition. Entries are coming in. Will set date for another meeting. Continue list of volunteers at GM.

Loy Yang Power - \$250 LYP Service Grant for volunteer work by David Stickney

Supper box. Vi Harrison would be willing to look after supper requirements if the box could be stored in the cupboard at the meeting room. Will try out this system. Thank you to both Lorna Long and Beatrice

Roberts who have looked after our supper requirements for a long while.

Club Website. David has found CD of website so will ask Gavin Dinsdale to fix problems (changing email addresses and problems viewing site through Firefox). Wendy to update Botany program.

### **Conservation Matters**

Alpine grazing. Mountain Cattlemens Association is lobbying to have cattle returned to Alpine NPs, claiming cattle reduce fire risk. Apparently the Coalition support this and claim they will return them if they win the next election. Jackie has checked that this is their policy, so the club will write a letter expressing our concerns

### **GUEST SPEAKER FOR AUGUST**

**Greg Gordon**, Victoria University teacher, has been rescuing and rehabilitating native animals for years. Greg is an animal technician lecturer at Victoria University's Werribee Campus and also volunteers as regional co-ordinator of Wildlife Victoria, an organisation that provides 24-hour wildlife rescue and information.

He was recognised for his excellence in teaching at VU's 2009 Vice-Chancellor's Staff Awards for helping the University develop one of Australia's only qualifications in wildlife rehabilitation.

Greg has found that a knowledge of animal parasites is very important in the rehabilitation of Australian wildlife.

### **FOR THE DIARY**

SEANA Camp at Camp Rumbug 15-18 October. Information has been sent. We still need lots of volunteers to help with the running of the event, especially excursion facilitators.

### **THANK YOU .....**

..... to those who responded so quickly to Wendy's call to help a struggling temporary editor whilst the real editor is overseas.

There are one or two articles which will carry over, and more are coming to ensure that the Editor quickly forgets about holidays.

Bruce Bremner



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsl.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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AUGUST 2010

Issue No. 534



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 27 August

Wildlife Parasites – Greg Gordon

Excursion: Saturday 28 August

Wildlife Parasites Workshop. **See page 6 for details.**

Bird Group:

Tuesday 7 September to Moe Water Treatment Works. Meet by 9.30am at main gate off Old Sale Rd (shortly after turning right at northern end of Moore St, Moe). Alix needs names in advance. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 4 September – Redhill Rd, Callignee property to look at vegetation after Feb 09 fires. Meet 10am at the Traralgon South Hall and convoy from there. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 24 September

Management of Protected Areas – David Farrar

Excursion: Saturday 25 September

Related excursion to Mullundung State Forest. Meet 10am Gormandale Hall, or carpool at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant, cnr Princes Hwy & Whittakers Rd at 9.30.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER ISSUE: 10 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**Please Note: Memberships for 2010-11 not paid will be cancelled**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

## LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT AFTER BUSHFIRE

Dr Greg Moore, Fire Ecologist and past Principal of Burnley Horticultural College, spoke to the Club on land management after bushfires just after the first anniversary of the Black Saturday bushfires. His talk covered not only the effects and recovery of the bush itself but also of property and gardens which had been burnt.

Much of his research covered plant recovery after the Ash Wednesday bushfires.

Greg said he had been asked to talk to speak regularly from 1982 to 1995 on the topic but people become complacent and only in the past year has this changed and the 'this must never happen again' statements again being heard. It can and it will.

Evidence shows that fire is part of this country's ecology, that trees rarely die in fire and that fires are regenerative for the bush and only damaging because of human principles. He believes that current debate is neither well balance nor informed. His research has included a study of mosaic burning to which he is not opposed and thinks it has its place but believes it comes at a cost. As with prescribed burning, it must be asked - are the benefits worth the cost? Costs include loss of biodiversity, risk of erosion, volatilising nutrients such as nitrogen and production of carbon dioxide.

He said that any plant will burn if it is dry enough and hot enough. Low flammability trees have the following characteristics:

- Green foliage during the fire season
- High moisture and mineral salt content in leaves
- Low levels of dead canopy especially bark
- Capacity to compete with and suppress grasses and other understorey species
- Capacity to survive droughts and occasional fires

Greg expressed reluctance to name any fire resistant species but gave the following list:

*Acacia baileyana* *A. howittii*  
*A. mearnsii*

<i>A. dealbata</i>	<i>Angophora</i> spp
<i>Atriplex nummularia</i>	
<i>A. versicaria</i>	<i>Casuarina</i> spp*
<i>Myoporum</i> spp**	
<i>Rhagodia baccata</i>	<i>R. nutans</i>
<i>Banksia marginata</i>	
<i>Eucalyptus bauerana</i>	<i>E. gummifera</i>
<i>Grevillea rosmarinifolia</i>	
<i>Corymbia maculata</i> ^	<i>Melia azedarach</i>

\*Good spark catcher \*\*Prostrate Boobialla can be used instead of grass ^Spotted Gum has lower oil content than Eucalypts and does not flare

Also Oaks, Elms, Poplars and Liquidamber are useful as they shade, are green and do not have litter in summer. (He did note that some oaks burn in California and Portugal.)

There are a variety of effects of fire on plant material. It may be burnt (high temperature oxidation), singed (superficial burning) or scorched (hot air - no burning). This last was shown in the Macedon fire of 1982 when 100 year old Rhododendrons lost their leaves causing the owners to consider selling the property on which the house was destroyed. Because the owners were told their plants would recover in the following spring, the owners re-built the house and stayed.

Messmates blackened on the outside trunk put out epicormic growth because the thick bark insulated the new shoots. After a fire some plants die, some seem to survive but their cambial layer is dead (eg *Agathis* or Kauri Pine with it thin layer of bark), and some trees are merely defoliated. Fire scars on trees are usually upside of slope or lee side of the tree because litter collects there and the fire burns hotter and longer. Roots can smoulder with the burning continuing under ground, sometimes under a road and re-emerge on the other side many months later. Older trees can be ringbarked by fire at their base as the old bark tends to be trapped by soil. Treeferns were nearly bulldozed in 1983 as they were thought to be burnt but photographs taken after the 1939 fires showed treeferns were the first to regenerate. They had merely been defoliated. If the cambial layer of trees boils, the bark pops off as the tree has been 'stewed' and dies. If bark is removed such a tree, about a week after a fire has been through and the cambial

layer is blue stained, the tree is probably infected with a *Penicillium* fungus and will ultimately die. Blackwoods also can exhibit symptoms. As trees are usually removed at the community's cost immediately after a fire but can cost \$2000 six months later, it is beneficial to know a tree's fate early on. Experts can predict with 80% certainty as to the survival of a burnt tree by presence of cracked and lifting bark, bark separating from cambium and sapwood, dead or discoloured cambium, ringbarked trunks or major branches or ringbarking at soil level or mulch surface.

Common Eucalypt adaptations to fire are: thick bark, sclerophyllous leaves, epicormic buds, lignotubers, woody fruits, fibrous/stringy bark volatile oil in leaves, seedling regeneration. In the recovery phase most Eucalypts produce epicormic growth. This growth is not strongly attached and eventually breaks off lower on the trunk. Contrary to media expectations even in the regions of the hottest fires lignotuber and epicormic shoots appeared 10 days after Black Saturday. Bracken appeared 6 months later and hid other plants such as Maidenhair fern. Greg's opinion is that a 'wait and see' attitude to regeneration as it can take up to 2 years. Suckers may also be produced but these need to be managed as too many sprout. Olives will sprout from the base. If two shoots are selected (cut out one 2 years later) and use for grafting. Olives will be produced three years later instead of six if replanting occurs. Roses and fruit trees can be treated similarly. Rhododendrons may be back in leaf a few weeks after fire or may wait til the spring. Plants in this situation are subject to colder weather in winter and excess heat in the summer – eg treeferns. New Eucalypt seedlings germinate from seeds dropped from trees burnt by fire – those on the ground are either eaten by ants or have been burnt in the fire. Other species, eg Acacias and Banksias do germinate from seeds in the soil as the fire damages the seed coat. Usually germination does occur until seasonal conditions are favourable. Fires in Mountain Ash forests invariably kill the trees (and other gum barked trees) but two months later the blackened ash lay is covered by dead leaves, fruit, seeds and ash and debris from the canopy, creating

microhabitats with mulch, nutrients, moisture and protection from the elements. Later fungi appear, often very large, producing spores and re-establishing the mycorrhizal associations.

In the cleaning up phase dead trees must be felled for safety reasons. Many conifers are fire sensitive and may look healthy but after 3-6 months the canopy dies. The cambium is exposed in the fissures of the thick bark and can be destroyed. Redwoods do survive fires – like Stringybarks they grow in a fire prone environment. Regeneration of the burnt areas is not uniform and depends upon aspect, slope, environmental and microclimate effects. Eucalypt seedlings and lignotuber shoots emerge in spring rather than soon after a fire and avoid later summer heat. Dead trees on the ground not only provide a protective habitat and a 'greenhouse' for the seedlings but they also stop erosion. Removal of debris can reduce seedling germination, delay recovery and affect the composition of the community that establishes after the fire. Lignotuber shoots can grow to 5 metres in one year and 15 metres in two, although base ringbarking by the fire may eventually kill them – 50-100% die. Epicormic shoots have a 0-50% mortality. October often produces spectacular displays of fungi decomposing the dead wood. Cracks can occur in the bark of smooth barked gums in November. This is a natural occurrence (the growing tree splits the bark as the trunk diameter expands) and the tree is thriving. Weed control is crucial after a fire at this time as it is easier to control the problem before it becomes unmanageable.

The importance of vegetation to owners of properties which have been burnt is underestimated by most authorities. Trees are important, not only to the human psyche but they can reduce wind speed and swirling during a fire and canopies can act as spark or ember arresters. They can deflect a crown fire over the top of a house. But trees near powerlines may clash with conductors and increase fire risk. Greg argued strongly that at least insulators should be on wires and preferably that lines be underground. He pointed to the cost of a large part of Victoria being without power for three days. Fibrous



bark trees can cause spot fires many kilometres from their source. Hollow trees can act as a chimney, throwing sparks and making firefighting dangerous and difficult as can falling trees.

In preparing for the fire season, he said that the best action was raking litter 20 metres from a house was the best fire prevention measure. Use lawn, paving, gravel, low flammability plants around a house in conjunction with removal of fuel. Replace Stringybarks close to a house with smooth barked evergreen fire retardant species.

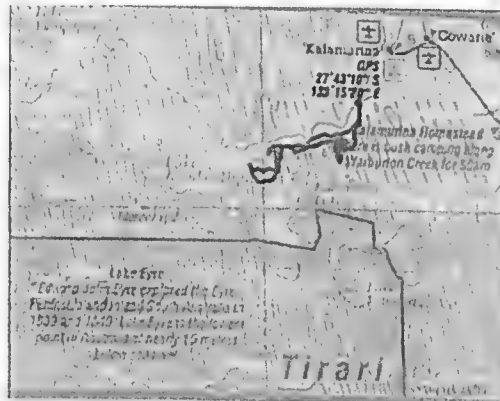
In answer to questions, first on salvage logging Greg said it was fine for conifer plantations. For native forests there can be economic benefits but removal does cause damage and reduces habitat. He would be happier if the bark was removed from the trees before salvage - the cambial layer where the minerals and sugars are transported up and down the tree would remain for nourishment of regrowth - rather than discarded at the mill site. Greg was also ambivalent about prescribed burning saying that such plots had burnt in the Ash Wednesday fires as well as the 2009 fires. Prescribed burning had no effect on crown fires. But large sections of the population believe that it makes the bush safe. He believes 'Grazing prevents Blazing' to some degree but it is only part of the story. Cattle bring in weeds, change drainage patterns and distort the native vegetation with selective grazing. On climate change he remarked that bushfires have a cycle on a 7 - 14 year basis however with change, all bets are off. Fires are part of our natural system and could increase in intensity and frequency.

Jackie Tims

## SIMPSON DESERT CAMEL WALK

Graham Duell addressed the Field Naturalist meeting in Moe on July 23, 2010. He spoke about his 2009 Simpson Desert Camel Walk illustrated by a Power Point presentation titled 'Australian Desert Expeditions'. This was also the company name of the organisers. The three-week trek took place in late winter. He explained these walks typically involved several different groups: - each typically had 12 paying participants, 3 scientists, and 5 crew for each segment. The

first leg was in south-east Northern Territory, the next back down the far west of Queensland and then into South Australia. Most walkers were retired botanists or geologists.



Graham joined the leg through the two million acre station 'Kalamurina' formerly used for grazing cattle for over 100 years until bought by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy about two years before. This private organization buys degraded areas for isolation and allows them to return to their natural wilderness state after culling feral animals (wild camels and donkeys). Kalamurina now has restricted access status, lying between the Simpson Desert Conservation Park and Lake Eyre National Park with the Birdsville track to its eastern boundary. The Warburton River runs through the centre and this had been in flood a month or so beforehand. Despite this inflow, vegetation was still sparse more than 500 metres from the river as little rain had fallen.

Camels were reloaded each day and carried up to half a tonne of supplies on balanced packs; padded with straw. For example, one carried a fridge for vegetables and bread - this was left open to the night sky to cool below ambient temperatures. On another, its packs were covered with a flexible solar panel for recharging batteries on satellite phones. One camel only was allocated for riding - either in turn or for emergencies.

For the treks, each person after training, had to tend the needs of camels. Shade was usually found for each daytime stop. The camels were hobbled at night but allowed to feed for an hour each morning and night (mostly on *acacia victoriae*). No shooting or

chainsaw use was permitted in the area and standing wood could not be used for campfires. One in three dead trees had nesting birds.

The main purpose of the walk was to record GPS readings for any flora, fauna and artefacts that were found. The process required participants to walk line abreast (about 10m separation) while surveying the ground ahead. They covered about 10 km per day. Over the whole station, up to 300 plant species were expected, but for the section covered, 160 plants were noted. The bird count was 95 included two species of plover (lapwings) and a rare grey falcon. Besides many galahs and emus, only 5 or 6 mice, some beetles and two snakes were all the other animals that were seen. Considerable excitement occurred when Graham found a grinding stone and plate with matching contours used originally by indigenous tribes (the last being about 1920). Another exciting find were the tracks of a bilby, these had not been noted before here on previous treks.

Graham's slides showed white or red sandy expanses, sparse areas with little green vegetation, a range of aboriginal and other artefacts. Sections of remnant vegetation that held the sand together were typically 20 cm above the surrounding eroded sand. Many slides showed walkers and camels in various stages of the trek. The loaded camels could not walk on steep slopes so the walkers would have to lead them in a zig-zag pattern over dunes. Graham's talk did not dwell greatly on plant species, but for those interested, a fuller account and list of recorded species is in the magazine "Growing Australian" March 2010, p27-31.

Ray and Delma Hodges

## **FUNGI – GEOFF LAY 23rd April 2010**

Geoff Lay talked to us in April. He has been interested in Fungi for 40 years. He says that unlike birds they stay in one place and so are easy to look at and photograph. He also said that one delight is that you can go back to the same place at the same time in different years and find a totally different range of fungi, whereas the plants are usually much more constant in their appearance.

Fungi are neither plants nor animals; they have their own separate kingdom.

Unlike plants they lack chlorophyll and therefore do not manufacture their own energy.

He described the life cycle of the macrofungi. The fungus consists of a tangled mass of tiny white threads that penetrate the material on which the fungus is growing. This is the mycelium of hyphae. Mycelia can be white, red, blue, orange, brown or black. Hyphae grow outwards, produce enzymes, which soften and break apart the chemicals in the substrate; they then absorb these simpler chemical substances to fuel further growth. When the mycelium has enough in storage and the weather is right it produces its fruiting bodies, which are the fungi that we usually see. The fruiting bodies produce spores which disperse and if they land in a suitable site, then a new fungus develops.

Spores are not seeds but perform the same function. Each spore is a single cell and is very small. You can fit 200 on a pinhead and one fungus may produce up to 10 billion spores. The colour and ornamentation of the spores is important in separating different genera.

Decay is the effect of fungi, which gain their nutrition from decomposing dead organic matter. They may have a detrimental effect, causing disease (pathogens). Some have no discernable effect on their hosts and are called commensals, while mycorrhizal fungi have a symbiotic relationship of mutual benefit to host and fungus.

Fungi transport, store, release and recycle nutrients. Some can decompose lignin and cellulose, otherwise we would be buried in tree litter.

Mycorrhizal systems provide fungus-root systems for transformation of nutrients from soil to plants. Carbohydrates from the plant are transferred to the fungus, while soil nutrients are transferred from fungus to plant. This is essential in low nutrient soils.

Wood rots are valuable decayers of wood, but can be a pest when they attack timber.

Brown rot fungi destroy cellulose (walls) but are largely unable to attack the dark coloured

lignin. The decayed wood maintains a cubical block structure and is brown in colour.

White rot fungi have enzymes that attack all parts of wood so they appear lighter in colour and may be spongy, stringy, layered, fibrous or featureless.

Fungi are more world wide than higher plants of Australia. There are some 500,000 different fungi, and 20,000 macrofungi of which only 25% have been documented.

Features of importance in identifying the macrofungi include:

1. Cap: shape/colour/texture/margins
2. Flesh: thickness/colour/bruising/taste
3. Gills: stem attachment, waxy, spacing, thickness, colour, edges, latex
4. Veil: colour/structure
5. Stem: shape, interior, location, surface, colour, ring, volva
6. Location substrata: soil, wood, dung, moss
7. Spores: colour, shape, ornamentation

Geoff illustrated his talk throughout with superb photos of a wide variety of fungi. These included examples of a Fairy Ring.

Fairy Rings result from an initial ground fungus starting at a point and growing outwards in the soil as it feeds. When conditions are right for fruiting body production the fruiting bodies are produced at the outer extremity of the fungus, which means they are in a small circle. The next year the fungus grows outwards from the initial circle and so each year the fruiting bodies develop in a larger and larger circle producing the fairy ring. Many species of ground fungus can develop fairy rings, including the field mushroom.

He showed us a great variety of Gilled Fungi. The delicate little Mycenae and Marasmius species can be distinguished in the field by the flick test. A Mycena cap will fly off when flicked. A Marasmius just flexes and stays attached to the stem.

The Boletes have spore tubes instead of gills whereas Hydnum bears its spores on fleshy spines.

He showed us a variety of the delicately branching Coral Fungi and the Morel – *Morchella elata*, with its brown honey-combed surface, which is a prized eating fungus especially in Europe.

*Aseroe rubra*, the Starfish Fungus is unusual and attractive to look at, but belonging to the stinkhorn family it has an unpleasant smell to attract flies to help disperse its spores. In the same family is the Basket Fungus – *Ileodictyon gracile*. This fungus first appears as a whitish egg and then suddenly this bursts open and the basket inside expands. It is so light that it moves about in the wind and thus disperses its spores.

He showed us a variety of Puffballs, a variety of Bracket Fungi and the Vegetable Caterpillar – *Cordyceps gunii*, which feeds on a caterpillar which in turn feeds on the roots of an Acacia. The club-shaped fruiting body on the surface is connected to a dead caterpillar, perhaps a foot below ground

Finally he showed us a Slime Mould. Slime Moulds were once classified with the fungi, but are now placed in an entirely different Kingdom.

Ken Harris.

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 23.7.2010

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 27 August:** Wildlife Parasites – Greg Gordon

**Saturday 28 August:** Wildlife Parasites Workshop, 10-1 at LCHS, Moe. See page 6.

**Friday 24 September:** Management of Protected Areas – David Farrar

**Saturday 25 September:** Related excursion to Mullundung SF. Meet Gormandale Hall 10am, or car pool from Traralgon Mexican Restrnt, cnr Hwy and Whittakers Rd at 9.30.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 4 September – Redhill Rd, Callignee property to look at regeneration after Feb 09 fires. Meet 10am at Traralgon South Hall, convoy from there. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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**Bird Group:** Tuesday 7 September – Moe Water Treatment Works. Meet by 9.30 at main gate off Old Sale Rd (shortly after turning right at the northern end of Moore St, Moe). Alix needs names in advance so please contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1222.07. Investment A/c \$12,014.06.

## **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

SEANA camp progress – have received a good number of registrations.

Club History – Wendy has started layout but has decided A5 book is not suitable for material. Suggest letter size and will consult printer and get new quote from Pazzaz.

Photo competition – received 214 photographs from 21 members. Catalogue prepared and ready to be printed. Exhibition invitations to be printed in magazine for club members and sent to other interested parties. Use winning photos for publicity in local press and TV. Motion: That the club cover the cost of a modest lunch for photographic committee members and judges. K Harris/J Tims. Carried.

Supper box – Vi Harrison has taken over and Lorna organized suitable box for safe storage in cupboard.

Club Website – Wendy has updated Botany program. David has a contact who has suggested some significant changes, will try to make minor changes now and look into it next year.

Peter Homan fauna surveys – Peter will be surveying all the areas covered in his talk again in 2011 and 2012. He is willing for members of our club to be involved in some capacity such as coming along at certain times to see which species are caught/recorded etc providing TRUenergy give permission.

Birds of Latrobe Region brochure – article in *Link* (Latrobe City newsletter) has resulted in requests from DSE Traralgon to obtain copies, and Sale ABC radio to interview someone for their breakfast program.

Grand Strzelecki Track – Ken Harris is Treasurer of the committee.

## **Conservation Matters**

Cattle in Alpine NP – Jackie has prepared letter to send to local Coalition members.

VEAC discussion paper on Remnant Native Vegetation Investigation has been produced and David tabled a copy.

## **GUEST SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER**

**David Farrar** will speak on the subject of Management of Protected Areas, within the South Gippsland Marine and Coastal Parks and Corner Inlet Ramsar site protection of wader birds from Red Fox. David is currently Ranger-Team Leader with Parks Victoria, based at their Foster office. He was previously a Ranger at Kinglake NP, where his responsibilities included management of pest plants and animals such as feral pigs and goats and of pest plants,

## **FOR THE DIARY**

**SEANA Camp at Camp Rumbug** 15-18 October. Information has been sent. We still need lots of volunteers to help with the running of the event, especially excursion facilitators.

**Bird Challenge Day** is Saturday December 4, 2010. Sharpen up the eyes and ears for this exciting annual event, counting the birds in our area.

For more information contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

## **THE EDITOR IS BACK!**

A big thank you to Bruce who did the editor's job for the last two months while I was away on holiday. And also to everyone who responded to Wendy's call for more material for him to work with.

## **PLEASE NOTE**

The 'excursion' on Saturday 28 August is a wildlife parasites workshop, to follow up from Greg Gordon's talk the night before. It will take place at our meeting room at the Latrobe Community Health Service in Moe, from 10am to 1pm.

More microscopes are needed, so if you have one, could you please bring it along.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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SEPTEMBER 2010

Issue No. 535



# *Latrobe Valley* *Naturalist*



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## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 24 September      Management of Protected Areas – David Farrar  
Excursion: Saturday 25 September      Mullundung SF. Meet 10am Gormandale Hall, or carpool  
at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant, corner Princes  
Highway and Whittakers Rd at 9.30am.  
Bird Group:      Tuesday 5 October to Lyrebird Walk & Baths Rd  
Reserve. Meet by 8.30 DST at Lyrebird Walk. Contact:  
Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)  
Botany Group:      Saturday 2 October – Blue Rock Dam environs. Meet  
10am at carpark on the dam wall. Contact: Wendy  
Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 22 October      Koalas on Snake Island – Ross Williamson  
Excursion: Saturday 23 October      Avon Mt Hedrick Wilderness Reserve. Meet 10am  
carpark at Heyfield Wetlands.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Peter Green ☎ 5626 8341

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK  
Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE  
Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE  
Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 8 OCTOBER 2010**  
**Please Note: Memberships for 2010-11 not paid will be cancelled**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

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## FUNGI HUNTING IN TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK 24<sup>th</sup> April 2010

Following his talk on Friday evening, Geoff and Jannie Lay accompanied us on our field outing on the next day, when we travelled to Tarra-Bulga National Park. This time we had a double outing as Geoff agreed to accompany me to Morwell National Park on the Sunday and club members were invited to accompany us and make it a whole weekend Fungus Foray.

We started at the Tarra Valley section of the park. We have had a very dry start to autumn which did not augur well for fungi, but Friday had been very wet indeed and this combined with the naturally moist shaded gully of the Tarra Valley meant that we found lots of interesting species, starting with puff balls, *Lycoperdon pyriforme*, before we had left the car park.

There were a variety of different *Mycena* and *Marasmius* species and Geoff demonstrated the very effective flick test for separating the two genera. I particularly like *Mycena clarkeana* with its pinkish fluted bells.

Bracket fungi were numerous and some of them caused Geoff some problems with their identity. There were several clusters of *Ryvardenia campyla*, distinguished by a pore surface that exudes drops of amber fluid.

At least three different coral fungi were seen. The multi-branching *Clavaria zollingeri* had beautiful purple forms, while the simpler form of *Clavaria corallinorosea* was pinkish-red, while another *Clavaria* species was beige-coloured.

Our progress along the track was very slow and we probably only covered a quarter of the outward track, before deciding to turn back for lunch. It appeared when we returned that John and Margaret Sunderland had progressed rather faster and had got to the end of the track at Cyathea Falls and had found a very special fungus there.

We lunched at the Visitors centre at Balook and then continued our fungus search in the Bulga part of the park.

One fungus we found was one I had sought for a long time. We found a Chanterelle – *Cantharellus concinnus*. This small fungus is funnel shaped, with gills running down the stalk. It is yellow-orange in colour and is said to smell of apricots. In Europe Chanterelles are highly prized fungi for eating.

All the time we were walking in the Bulga park, I was watching the time and hoping that we would get back in time to race back to Tarra to find the fungus that John and Margaret had discovered. I needn't have worried! We found a whole colony of them by the Bulga track.. This fungus is known in Britain as the Horn of Plenty – *Craterellus cornucopioides*. It is in the same family as the Chanterelle and is also funnel-shaped, but a much broader funnel. It is blackish on the inside of the funnel, but much lighter on the outside. This is also a popular fungus for eating in Europe, despite some rather unattractive alternative common names such as Trumpet of Death, Black Chanterelle, Black Trumpet.

An unusual fungus we discovered was the Candle Snuff Fungus – *Xylaria hypoxylon*. The fruiting bodies are club-shaped and are blackish, but with a powdery white coating on the upper half. They appear to be quite hard.

The visit to Tarra-Bulga was a great success with a fascinating variety of fungi, most of which Geoff was able to name for us. The day was well attended and a good number pledged to join us again on Sunday in Morwell National Park.

Ken Harris.

## FUNGI HUNTING IN MORWELL NATIONAL PARK 25<sup>th</sup> April 2010

On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April, a smaller party of field naturalists continued our weekend of fungus hunting in Morwell National Park. We started in Fosters Gully and got off to a good start before we left the car park. Looking across the gully from the car park we noticed a large bracket fungus on a eucalyptus tree stump. This greatly pleased Geoff Lay as it proved to be the so-called Curry Punk – *Piptoporus australiensis*. This is a fungus that had eluded Geoff up to now, although it is said to be fairly common and I have previous records of it from the park. The name refers to the strong odour of curry

given off by the fruiting body as Geoff demonstrated to us.

Beside the Curry Punk we found a little *Mycena*, *Mycena nargan* which has a blackish cap with scattered white flecks over it. This was a new species for Morwell National Park.

Fungi were not as prolific as in Tarra-Bulga, but we still found quite a variety.

We found several examples of the Rosette Fungus – *Podoscypha petalodes*, which has flower like rosettes as its fruiting bodies.

There were also several examples of the Earth Star Fungus – *Geastrum triplex*.

One piece of dead wood was inhabited by the Green Elf-cup – *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*. The fungus appears as tiny little green flattened toadstools on the wood. It is of particular interest, because it stains the dead wood it is growing on bright green. This habit has been exploited in England around Tunbridge Wells. Tunbridge Ware consists of small wooden articles decorated with a mosaic of different coloured woods. The wood stained by the fungus provided a green colour not normally available from natural woods.

On a Messmate tree in Fosters Gully was another interesting bracket fungus. Geoff was unsure of its identity, but it proved to be the Beefsteak Fungus – *Fistulina hepatica*. It was in an early stage of development of the fruiting body. It was of particular interest to me as it appeared a year previously on the same tree but 5 feet higher on the tree trunk. It seems probable that the fungus is living in or under the bark layer of the tree and each year puts out its fruiting body at a different place.

Again we did not progress very far in our exploration just reaching the bench along the gully where we hoped to find the Vegetable Caterpillar – *Cordyceps gunnii* which is often there, but it wasn't to be seen this time.

We returned to the car park for lunch and a few of us extended our search into the Billys Creek section in the afternoon. Here the dryness of the season was much more apparent and fungi were much less common, but we did find a few fungi of interest

including the tiny Little Pin – *Rickiella fibula*, which always grows in a mat of moss.

We were very grateful to Geoff Lay for his guidance in two great days of fungus forays.

Ken Harris

## LADYBIRDS IN THE LOUNGE ROOM AGAIN

In July 2004 I wrote an article in the Naturalist about the large numbers of ladybirds which had appeared in our lounge room in winter which had clustered together in the top of the window frame. By the end of winter they had all died and I didn't know if this was the natural end of their life span or if the warm conditions in the room had proved fatal.

Each winter I have noticed some coming in, but this year they have appeared in large numbers again. There were probably nearly 100 altogether, with many crawling around the windows and several clusters in the top of the frame again, in about the same place as I'd found them in 2004.

I thought I'd better find out what I could on the internet. I confirmed their identity as *Harmonia conformis*, the Common Spotted Ladybird. It is an orange ladybird with 23 black spots on the wing covers. They are a beneficial ladybird as they eat aphids, scale insects and mites, unlike some which suck the juices out of plants such as vegetables. The larvae are black when they hatch (they look rather like a strange earwig) and go through four stages of development (instars) before pupating. The larvae have two yellow bands round the abdomen after the second instar. This is one of the species which aggregate in winter, then they become active again in Spring and lay their eggs. One site suggested that you could look after them by placing them in a container with air holes and put in a cotton ball soaked in water.

I collected all the ladybirds I could find and placed them in a container. I'm sure that they're attracted to the lounge room because it is warm, but I think they end up desiccating as it is too warm. When I placed the damp cotton bud in with them they swarmed over it, which confirmed my view that they were in need of water. After a few

hours I thought I'd better add more water to the cotton ball, and I made it quite wet. This was a mistake as the next day all the ladybirds were dead.

A couple of weeks later I found a lot more had come in, so I have collected them into the container again, but have been sparing with the water. I have about 30 ladybirds which are still healthy after a few weeks, and are aggregating in the corners of the container. I hope they will last in there over winter and I can put them out when the weather warms up so they can continue to keep my garden pests down. I think my garden must provide a good healthy environment if it produces so many ladybirds, but I'm at a loss to explain why they come into the same room each year and aggregate in the same spot within the room.

Wendy Savage

### REGENERATION AFTER BLACK SATURDAY FIRES

Eight intrepid members of the Botany Group braved forecasted high winds and thirty mm of rain to inspect the regrowth on 93 hectares of Black Saturday fire ravaged bushland. The property, owned by Gavin Wigginton and his son Andrew, has a Trust for Nature covenant on it. The regrowth was spectacular, particularly Varnish Wattle (*Acacia verniciflua*) and Hop Goodenia (*G. ovata*) but also eucalypt seedlings as well as a species of peas, dogwoods, daisy bushes, kangaroo apples, mat rushes, clematis and of course orchids. (I am particularly impressed by the ability of some of our members to distinguish orchids by their leaves!). It was wonderful to see the epicormic growth on the Messmates (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) and surprisingly, most of the Blue Gums (*E. globulus*) as these are thin barked eucalypts. Some of the Blue Gums had died but a large percentage was surviving. Summer will be a test for them. Apple Boxes (*E. bridgesiana*) seedlings to 1.5 m tall were present as were seedlings of Blue Gums. Gavin was unsure if the Blue Gums present were native or remnants of a long ago planting.

The vegetation changed as we walked along the paths Gavin had cleared and we passed creeks with Rough Treeferns (*Cyathea australis*). Fallen trees sported young

Bracket fungi (*Sternum* sp.?) in colours from pale fawn to deep brown. This seemed to be due to light accessibility as the pale ones were almost in darkness. The only weeds we saw were in a strip cut by Telstra for fibre optic cable after the fire, obviously brought in by vehicles or the workers.

Gavin told us how he and his wife had been in their house when the fire arrived. Although he had double glazed windows, the heat of the fire melted the aluminium frame of the house and the windows popped out allowing the fire to enter. They escaped to a nearby steel shed which became extremely hot but they survived. The house burnt to the ground. A steel frame of their new house with a roof specially fitted with fire resistant silicon based material will be their home when other fire resistant materials are added to the walls.

These species need to be added to Gavin's list of plants (thanks to John Topp, Ken Smith and Ron Carey) which had been sourced from DSE as being present in the district:

*Dampiera stricta*, *Olearia argophylla*, *Lomandra spectabilis* var *excelsus*, *Pultanea daphnoides*, *Solanum aciculatum* and *Apalochlamys spectabilis*.

And apart from a short period of light rain, the weather was fine.

Jackie Tims

### WILDLIFE PARASITES

Talk by Greg Gordon, Friday 27 August 2010, followed by a workshop on Saturday 28 August.

A teacher at Victoria University, Greg developed a TAFE course, *The Husbandry and Rehabilitation of Wildlife*, which provides animal welfare skills for veterinary nursing and animal technician students.

Of what relevance is a talk about parasites to a group such as ours? Greg pointed out that there are many zoonotic diseases, diseases that can be transmitted from other vertebrate animals to humans. The bat Lyssavirus in one example. Also, parasites can move from domestic animals to wildlife.

Greg explained that parasites are part of the ecology, and that all wildlife species can carry parasites. Alluding to climate change, Greg explained that susceptibility to infection by parasites increases when an animal is under stress. For example, in a dryer climate, the percentage of water in gum leaves is reduced, putting stress on Koalas, as they cope with the natural toxins in their diet, leaving them more open to parasitic infections. Greg predicted that as our environment changes parasitic infections in wildlife are likely to increase. An understanding of how these changes in climate affect host-parasite relationships and the emergence of infectious diseases in wildlife will be essential to future conservation management of wildlife populations.

Illustrating his comments with photographs and diagrams, Greg explained the life cycles of a number of parasites, their modes of transmission and means to prevent infection. Parasites cause disease by their physical presence, by destruction of tissue, by robbing the host of nutrients or blood, and/or by secreting toxins. While some parasites lead to severe debilitation, others have very little effect on their host.

**Flatworms:** These include flukes and tapeworms. These worms are usually hermaphroditic – any one worm can reproduce both eggs and sperm – enabling reproduction despite the isolation of the worm within the host.

Liver flukes attach themselves with suckers and spines inside the bile duct, causing liver damage in sheep, goats, cattle, and some wildlife. In suitable conditions, a species of mud snail acts as the intermediate host, a necessary stage in the life cycle. Steps to prevent this in sheep include the drenching of sheep, and regular changes of paddock.

**Tapeworms:** The Hydatid Tapeworm adult infects dogs and other canines. This small, segmented worm attaches itself with a ring of hooks and suckers to the lining of the intestines of the host. The worm has no digestive system; it absorbs nutrients from the host's intestines. Each segment produces eggs which are passed in the faeces. If ingested by an intermediate host, a sheep,

kangaroo or human, the eggs produce large cysts in the intestines, the liver or the brain cavity. Greg commented that populations of kangaroos that are stressed, for example landlocked by loss of habitat, are susceptible. The Dog Tapeworm is a larger worm, up to 50 cm long. It affects young, old or ill dogs. The intermediate host, necessary for the completion of the life cycle, is the flea. A similar tapeworm affects cats, with fleas as intermediate host.

**Roundworms** are unsegmented, tube-like worms. They have a mouth, digestive system and anus. Sexes are separate. Life cycles can be direct (eggs infect an animal and develop directly into adult worms) or indirect (involve a stage in an intermediate host). These include lungworms, pinworms, whipworms and hookworms.

The following worms do not usually affect humans: Lungworms are microscopic and lodge in the lungs of the host. Eggs are coughed up by the host. Intermediate hosts, such as certain snails, slugs and earthworms are infected with a larval stage. A mammal eating these becomes infected with the adult worms. Heartworms affect cats, dogs and other canines. Adult worms live in the heart and pulmonary arteries. The intermediate host is a mosquito. Whipworms live in the large intestine of dogs.

The following worms can affect humans: Pinworms are parasites of the large intestine infect ruminants, horses, rabbits, rodents and humans. Infection is by ingesting eggs. Roundworms live in the intestines, feeding on the contents, robbing the host of nutrients. They affect dogs, cats, rodents and other animals including humans. Some species can migrate within the human body, for example; to the eye. Hookworms affect young dogs and cats, living in the small intestine. In humans, they can settle subcutaneously – for example under the skin in the feet.

**Protozoan parasites:** Protozoans are single-celled organisms.

**Toxoplasmosis:** Most cats carry toxoplasmosis, and most of us are probably immune to it. It can be dangerous to the foetus during pregnancy and to people with a weakened immune system. (Prevention –



cook or freeze meat before feeding it to a cat, wash hands after possible contact with cat faeces, change kitty litter frequently, handling it with gloves and a mask, cook your meat well or freeze it.)

The following protozoans can be transmitted in water contaminated with animal faeces. Amoebic dysentery is caused by a species of amoeba. Coccidia affects many species including humans, damaging the lining of the gut, causing enteritis. Cryptosporidia causes diarrhoea in many species, including humans, and damages the villi lining the small intestine.

Giardia affects many species, including humans, causing diarrhoea, intestinal cramping and weight loss. Infection is usually from contaminated drinking water, from pets or from chook manure. Greg warned us to wash strawberries well.

**Prevention:** Greg stressed the importance of treating domestic animals regularly according to the recommendations. For example, worming pets (treating the family at the same time) and by good pasture management and the drenching of sheep. Treating animals for fleas. Avoiding feeding offal to dogs. Washing our boots when returning from 'the environment'. Washing our hands after contact with soil. Avoiding kissing pets or allowing dogs to lick our faces. Meat should be butchered hygienically and (especially kangaroo meat) should be cooked well. Freezing meat kills the eggs of many parasites. When bushwalking, beware of drinking water which could be contaminated by wildlife or feral animals.

## Workshop

The participants brought microscopes and samples of animal droppings including that of bird (probably magpie or raven), hen, wild duck, wombat, fox, alpaca, rabbit and kangaroo. Greg demonstrated the method of faecal flotation used to prepare samples for microscopic examination. He provided us with the necessary equipment and our group prepared one or two samples from each animal represented. We searched our samples, drawing on Greg's expertise. We needed microscopes with good resolution at 400 times magnification. In many of our samples we found no parasites. We

identified roundworm eggs in wombat droppings, threadworm eggs in bird droppings and Coccidia in kangaroo droppings.

Margaret Rowe

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 23.8.2010

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 24 September:** Management of Protected Areas – David Farrar

**Saturday 25 September:** Mullundung State Forest. Meet Gormandale Hall 10am, or car pool from Traralgon Mexican Restaurant, cnr Princes Hwy and Whittakers Rd 9.30am.

**Friday 22 October:** Koalas on Snake Island – Ross Williamson

**Saturday 23 October:** Avon Mt Hedrick Wilderness Reserve. Meet 10am carpark at Heyfield Wetlands.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 2 October – Blue Rock Dam environs. Meet 10am at carpark on dam wall. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 5 October – Lyrebird Walk & Baths Rd Reserve. Meet **8.30am** (daylight saving time) at Lyrebird Walk. Contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Finance** – Balances: Not available as Treasurer away.

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

SEANA camp – meeting held 4 August. About 90 bookings with 51 in Camp Rumbug (need 60). Second circular sent out with updates and payment of balance reminder. Excursion timetable planned based on preferences received. Leaders to be contacted and confirmed. Ask at GM for excursion facilitators.

Club History – book layout nearing completion. Quote from Pazzaz for 200 copies A4 size black & white with colour cover: 48 page - \$1120, 64 page - \$1278. Size expected to be 64 pages.

Photo competition – pictures prepared for display. Invitations being sent. Publicity being organized by Alix in local media. Fill spaces in roster at GM.

Eric Lubcke Reserve – email from Simon Clark, application to Council for a

2010/2011 budget of \$5000 for the maintenance was not successful. Have commenced work on weed and grass control. New sign being designed and will show us draft. Plan to clean up understorey when funding available.

Cameron McGregor, Environmental Planner, Latrobe City requested help regarding Bio-links project. Collecting data on revegetation sites, rare and endangered flora and fauna, existing remnant vegetation, bush reserves, etc to assist with strategic plans for revegetating to link the isolated bio-islands and other areas of vegetation.

Latrobe Community Health Service meeting room – charge to go up from \$15 to \$44 starting from September meeting. We have been charged \$15 for many years, and as we have storage and kitchen use the rise is in line with charges for other users.

John Jones has sent DVD and CD of Ollerton Ave Reserve orchids he has photographed over many years. Copies are available to interested members.

Australia Post Morwell have changed position of post boxes and issued new keys. Lorna and David Stickney will have one each.

TRUenergy (Yallourn W) plan a 1GW combined cycle Gas Power Station, and are investigating various impacts of the project. John Sunderland, our rep on Yallourn ERC was contacted for club views.

Program planning meeting deferred until after October 15-18 camp.

## **Conservation Matters**

Australian Paper CCC change of terms of reference - John Poppins has checked it and is satisfied with it.

## **GUEST SPEAKER FOR OCTOBER**

**Ross Williamson.** Koalas were introduced to Snake Island (now part of the Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park) in 1945 from French Island and Phillip Island. By the early 1900s the Koala population had expanded beyond the capacity of the island's habitat to support it and large numbers of Manna Gums started to decline and die due to defoliation. Parks Victoria has since 1994 been controlling the Koala population through relocations and sterilisations. This program has been very successful and is now

in its final stages. Ross has been involved in the population control program since 1992 and has documented what is one of the most successful native animal management programs in Victoria's history.

## **FOR THE DIARY**

SEANA Camp at Camp Rumbug 15-18 October. Information has been sent. We still need lots of volunteers to help with the running of the event, especially excursion facilitators.

**Bird Challenge Day** is Saturday December 4, 2010. Sharpen up the eyes and ears for this exciting annual event, counting the birds in our area.

## **KOOKABURRA GETS THE WORM**

I enjoy the close up views we get of our resident kookaburras in winter when they often perch on the low branches of our deciduous trees watching for prey in the lawn. I spotted one of them out our kitchen window recently on the ground and it appeared to have something in its beak which was attached to the ground.

When I looked through my binoculars I could see that it had the end of a worm in its beak, and it was stretched tightly with the rest of the worm presumably hanging on for grim death in its tunnel. I was amazed as this was exactly the same as a picture in 'The Early Bird', a book I used to read to our children when they were young, and I had always presumed it was a figment of the illustrator's imagination.

The worm and the kookaburra seemed to have reached an impasse, so the kookaburra released the worm then quickly got another grip and pulled it tight again with the worm still managing to hang on. I guess the kookaburra didn't want to pull too hard as the worm would snap and he would only get to eat its end. This procedure was repeated several times, until finally the kookaburra was able to draw his head and beak up slowly with the stretched worm getting longer and longer until finally it popped out of the tunnel. It was one of our long fat native worms, about 15 cm long. The kookaburra wasted no time swallowing it.

Wendy Savage

## Latrobe Valley Naturalist

### DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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OCTOBER 2010

Issue No. 536



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 22 October Koalas on Snake Island – Ross Williamson  
Excursion: Saturday 23 October Avon Mt Hedrick Wilderness Reserve. Meet 10am  
Heyfield Wetlands, or carpool at Traralgon Mexican  
Restaurant, cnr Princes Hwy and Whittakers Rd 9.15am.  
Bird Group: Tuesday 9 November (2<sup>nd</sup> is Cup Day) to Rintoul Creek.  
Meet by 8.30 DST at Tyers General Store. Contact: Alix  
Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)  
Botany Group: Saturday 30 October – Wonthaggi Wetlands. Meet 10am  
at carpark at the end of Reid Crescent. Contact: Wendy  
Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 26 November Impact of Habitat on Insect Communities – Peter  
O'Donnell  
Excursion: Saturday 27 November EVENING moth trapping at Morwell NP. Meet 6pm  
Kerry Rd carpark for tea, BBQ available.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK  
Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE  
Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE  
Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 12 NOVEMBER 2010 (final for 2010)  
Subscriptions for 2011-12 will be due 1 March 2011

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

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## TRUE ENERGY WETLANDS

The rain had been heavy the previous night and it was still cold and showery as we gathered near the locked gate into the wetlands. However, despite threatening clouds, it remained dry for the duration of the excursion. Our escort was Rob Moss and our leader, Peter Homan, had been doing fauna surveys in these wetlands. While we waited for everybody to arrive, we were able to have a close look at the bodies of tiny animals found by Jenny on her property. Peter identified them as a juvenile Dusky Antechinus and two Lesser Long-eared Bats.

At our first stop, our walk included a circumnavigation of the pond, which was the original farm dam and had been there for many years. Few of us saw the Spotted Grass-frog (*Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*); discovered under a log in a shallow ditch as it quickly disappeared down into its burrow. However, as we approached the pond we all had the opportunity to observe the plentiful bird-life, including swans, coots and several species of ducks:- Blue-billed, Hard head and Grey Teal. On the far bank, a Darter with wings outspread was "hanging out to dry". As we moved towards the water, small piles of fresh soil revealed where swamp rats had recently dug burrows. We could see a short way into the holes but were unable to see the rats, which were probably hiding there. Leading away from their burrows, the rats had created low tunnels through the long grass. As the grass regrows, the new shoots provide fresh food for the swamp rats, which are completely herbivorous. Throughout this area, where considerable replanting had been carried out, diggings and tunnels of swamp rats were plentiful.

A Whistling Kite soared overhead and a Darter flew the length of the pond. In the distance, a Nankeen Kestrel hovered between us and the rainbow. A flotilla of Black ducks sailed out from the reeds, turned as a group to face into the wind, and took off. Hovering over the water, then swooping up and down, a Swamp Harrier sufficiently unnerved another flock of ducks for them to take flight. High overhead a Swamp Harrier, Whistling Kite and Darter, which were identified by the way they hold their wings, circled around each other. In

another direction, a pair of Swamp Harriers played around each other.

Along with scats of wombats and Black (or Swamp) wallabies, numerous brown fungi of varying sizes dotted the area. On the far side, we found a colony of white puff-ball fungi. Peter showed us a small pond full of ribbon reeds that would be ideal habitat for the Growling Grass-frog (*Litoria raniformis*). He once heard a plop there, which could indicate their presence. The best time of year to see them is in November/December. A Little Black Cormorant was visible and a pair of Welcome Swallows hunted for insects over the water and reeds. Back amongst the trees, a mistletoe plant was coming into flower and the twiggy branches of a dead tea-tree were covered with the grey-green of a fruticose lichen.

Our second stop was on the bridge on the old Princes Highway. The old town of Morwell Bridge would have been a bit further along the road and it was interesting to see this area again after so many years. The nest of a Sea eagle was pointed out to us on the northern side and, to the south, a Great Egret with its neck thrust forward as it looked for food, moved slowly along the water's edge. An Eastern Whipbird could be heard calling in the scrub and a Crescent Honeyeater was identified by its call.

As we went through the gate to the third site, we looked down an avenue of leafy young trees arching over the track. Peter exclaimed about how the trees had grown and suggested to Rob that it now made an ideal site to do a bat survey, for the net used could be stretched across the track. Bats like to fly where it's easy, in open spaces, over paddocks or along roads and tracks.

On a tiny wooden jetty, we checked under the logs to see if anything was hiding there, then began to check all the pieces of wood, logs and stumps alongside the track. A Spotted Marsh Frog (*Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*) sheltered beneath a stump. Dark brown and plump, it had the long reddish stripe down its back but the spots were not showing because it had been out of the light. A padded white stripe or "lip" runs from below the eye to the shoulder on these

frogs. It belongs to the "Southern" family of frogs, which have straight tapering toes without pads. Three Southern Brown Tree Frogs (*Litoria ewingi*) were discovered under a small log. They varied in colour from tan to dark brown. A distinctly darker patch of colour runs from between their eyes down their backs, leaving a triangular patch of lighter colour from between their eyes down to the snout. Surprisingly, although they have the word "Southern" in their name, they actually belong to the Tree Frog family and have pads on the ends of their toes. The importance of leaving logs and stumps on the ground was obvious when we found frogs under other fallen branches. Peter warned those who had touched frogs to ensure they washed their hands as the skin of the frogs could carry toxins.

Amongst the trees a Spotted Pardalote called whilst across the pond were three Little Black Cormorants, a Darter, a Great Egret and a White-faced Heron. We could hear the ratchet sound of the Common Froglet (*Crinia signifera*) and found more tunnels of the Swamp Rats. The bulrushes were releasing clouds of fluff. An introduced species, they are out-competing the two indigenous species. Two Wedge-tailed Eagles seemed to be floating across the sky as they used the winds, but as one dropped its "pooh", it lifted its feet forwards so that it made a "clean" drop. We tried to identify one bird sound then discovered it was a "Rohan-bird" as he tricked us with his whistling.

As we walked back towards the road, we inspected a camera attached to a tree where it was being tested for motion photography. Under the trees were several large yellow Stalked Puffball fungi. We heard the piping of an Eastern Yellow Robin and saw a Grey Fantail flitting through the greenery. It was an informative and enjoyable morning and we thanked Rob for being there to open the gates for us, and Peter for being such an excellent guide.

To enable me to check on details for this report, Ken Harris lent me three books on frogs. From them, I discovered that *Limnodynastes tasmaniensis* has two common names, Spotted Grass-frog and Spotted Marsh-frog, both used and

acceptable. For *Litoria raniformis*, for which Peter used the common name Growling Grass-frog, one of the books gave it the same common name as it gave to *Litoria aurea*, the Green and Gold Bell Frog. The two species are very similar in colour and markings. Ken confirmed that all were acceptable and also told me that *raniformis* means "frog-shaped", which is rather obvious when used as a name for a species of frog, while *Limnodynastes* means "lord of the marshes", from the same Greek root as that of "dynasty".

Estelle Adams

## LVFNC PHOTO COMPETITION AND EXHIBITION 12-19 September 2010

The Photographic Competition and Exhibition organised as part of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations reached its climax on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September when the exhibition was opened and the winners certificates were presented by Andy Gillham, Ranger in Charge from Parks Victoria Gippsland Region.

Judging took place the day before with our four judges: Mary Austin, Graham Hancock, David McPhee and Colin McKeown assessing all the photographs. They are thanked greatly for their efforts and we were pleased that they all attended the opening of the display and said a few complementary words about the standard of the exhibits.



The judges L-R: David McPhee, Graham Hancock, Mary Austin, Colin McKeown

214 photographs were submitted by 21 members of LVFNC and these were distributed across 10 categories. The judges selected a winner in each category and then from these 10, selected one image as the best

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

in show. Over the week for which the exhibition was open, visitors were encouraged to select their own favourite picture and the picture getting the most votes was awarded the People's Choice Award and Medallion.

The standard of photographs submitted was very high and put on a great display for those who visited the Traralgon and District Art Society rooms in the Old Traralgon Railway Station. Thank you to all members who submitted photographs and thank you to all who assisted in organising the competition and in overseeing the exhibition for the week it was on display.

David Stickney was Master of Ceremony for the opening and found himself having to announce himself as the winner of two categories. There were three members whose entries were outstanding: Ken Smith was the winner in 3 categories; David Stickney was the winner in 2 categories and had 4 pictures highly commended; but perhaps the star of the show was Jenny Porter. Jenny had a winning picture in 1 category, but also had 9 of her pictures highly commended by the judges, so that she had winning entries in 8 of the ten categories.

The winning entries by categories were:

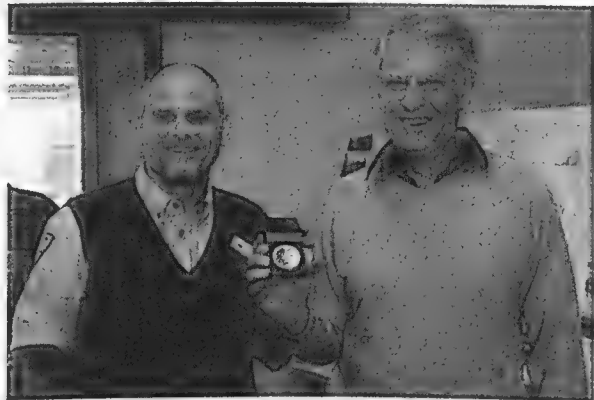
- *Trees*  
**Ken Smith** Austral Grass Trees
- *Flowering Shrubs*  
**Ken Harris** Pink Heath
- *Wildflowers*  
**David Stickney** Everlasting
- *Orchids*  
**Estelle Adams** Bearded Orchid
- *Ferns, Mosses etc*  
**David Stickney** Rough Tree Fern
- *Fungi, Lichens etc*  
**Jenny Porter** Lichen
- *Birds*  
**Ken Harris** Black-winged Stilts
- *Mammals, Reptiles etc*  
**Ken Smith** Swamp Wallaby
- *Insects, Spiders etc*  
**Ken Smith** Tau Emerald Dragonfly
- *Landscapes*  
**Estelle Adams** towards Mt. Kosciusko

In addition to the 6 members who were awarded winners certificates, 6 of our members had 1 or more of their pictures highly recommended by the judges. Our congratulations go out to all the winners and also to:

Ralph Laby  
Philip Rayment  
Baiba Stevens  
John Sunderland  
Lawrie Waddington

and Alix Williams

After announcing the winners in each category, it fell to David Stickney to announce the winner of the award of best in show and he once again had to announce his own name. Although David's speciality is very much in photographing birds, it was in the fields of Wild Flowers and Ferns that he won his two winners certificates and it was his picture of Everlasting (*Bracteantha bracteata*) taken on Mount Hotham, that was selected by the judges as the best in show. David was therefore awarded the best in show certificate and medallion.



Andy Gillham from Parks Victoria presenting David Stickney with his medallion

The final award was not decided until a week later when the people's choice votes were counted. The People's Choice award also went to the same category as the Best in Show, the Wildflowers, but the people chose a picture not selected by the judges and the People's Choice certificate and medallion were awarded to Ken Smith for his picture of Scented Sundew (*Drosera whittakeri*) taken in Tyers Park.

Congratulations to David Stickney and Ken Smith on their special awards and to all members who submitted photographs to

make this a very successful event showcasing so many lovely photographs of the natural world around us.

Ken Harris

## **REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 20.9.2010**

### **General Meetings & Excursions**

**Friday 22 October:** Koalas on Snake Island – Ross Williamson

**Saturday 23 October:** Avon Mt Hedrick Wilderness Reserve. Meet 10am at Heyfield Wetlands, or carpool from Traralgon Mexican Restaurant 9.15 sharp.

**Friday 26 November:** Impact of Habitat on Insect Communities – Peter O'Donnell

**Saturday 27 November:** Moth Trapping in Morwell NP. Meet 6PM for tea Kerry Rd carpark. BBQ available, BYO food etc.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 30 October – Wonthaggi Wetlands. Meet 10am at carpark at the end of Reid Cres. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246.

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 9 November (note date) – Rintoul Creek. Meet by 8.30am (daylight saving time) at Tyers General Store. Contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1287.43. Investment A/c \$12,111.01.

### **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

SEANA camp – Phil has sent out second mailing and started preparing camp booklet. Estimated numbers at this stage are 60 at Camp Rumbug and 45 meals only. Excursions being finalized with leaders contacted and facilitators allocated. Camp Rumbug have sent paperwork to be completed. Meeting 9.30am 22 September at Wendy's.

Club History – proof reading of layout has been done by Phil, Bon and Ollie. Final version at printers for final proof reading. 64 pages 200 copies cost is \$1278 plus some photographic charges. Suggest sell at \$10 with subsidized cost to club members at \$5.

Photo competition – great success. David Stickney overall winner. People's Choice award Ken Smith. Thank you to all the people who participated and helped out.

Thank you letters will be sent to judges and Mary Austin for calligraphy. Consider having another competition in 5 years.

Latrobe City Council Community Directory – have been removed from directory without being consulted. Will request notice in future, and get put back on.

Program planning meeting Wednesday 27 October at Lorna Long's – 6pm for tea and 7.30 for meeting. Bring food to share. Ask for ideas at next GM and in Naturalist.

Next BM change to Tuesday 19 October at Lorna Long's.

November BM will be setting subs for 2011. Will expect increase due to increased charge for meeting room.

Summer Camp at Gelantipy 21-24 January 2011. Start list at November GM.

### **Conservation Matters**

None

## **GUEST SPEAKER FOR NOVEMBER**

Peter O'Donnell is researching for a PhD at Monash University Gippsland, working in its conservation of bioresources group led by Dr Wendy Wright. His study draws on both ecology and sociology in looking at impacts of revegetation on agricultural land. One focus is on impacts of land management practices on invertebrate communities. He has previously lived and worked in the United States, where he completed a Master's degree in Insect Physiology, and South Korea.

## **FOR THE DIARY**

**Bird Challenge Day** is Saturday December 4, 2010. Sharpen up the eyes and ears for this exciting annual event, counting the birds in our area.

**Club Christmas Party** will be held at the Savage residence "Eurabbie" Saturday December 11 from 12 noon.

**Club Summer Camp** at Gelantipy 21-24 January 2011. Accommodation booked at Karoonda Park for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. Cost will be \$30 per person per night, with catered evening meals for Saturday and Sunday nights at \$25 each. BYO food for breakfasts and lunches. More information and list at next GM.

## PROGRAM PLANNING FOR 2011

27 October 6pm for tea, meeting starts 7.30 at Lorna Long's, 99 Chamberlain St, Newborough. Bring food to share. All members welcome. We need your ideas for speakers and excursions.

## EXCURSION RULES

*Back in January 1966 The Club had an excursion to the High Plains and the editor (Mr G T Scanlan) wrote some suggestions for the day. Here they are as they appeared in the January Naturalist for that year.*

1. As fires will almost certainly be banned, it will be necessary to take prepared food, enough for a full day, and tea or coffee in a thermos.
2. The cars face a long steep climb to about 5000ft, and as the weather will probably be hot, it will be advisable to carry a container of water for the purpose of topping up the radiator.
3. Heyfield is the last reliable source of petrol on the outward journey, and it would be wise to fill the petrol tank before leaving this outpost.
4. The road beyond Licola is gravelly and dusty, and it will be more comfortable to travel with some little distance between cars. However, members should follow the practice of keeping the following car in the rear-vision mirror from time to time. Drive carefully!
5. Don not divert from the main forestry road in a spirit of curiosity. Where the track signs state 'Jeep Track Only' the tracks are only suitable for four-wheeled drive vehicles.
6. There are snakes in the mountains, especially near water! Usually they will be as frightened of us as we of them, but will act defensively if cornered or stepped on. Care is needed in walking where conditions suggest it be advisable.
7. An unnecessary admonition? Do not pick native flowers or despoil native plants. Many are legally protected – all are to be protected by sincere field naturalists.

## DOWN MEMORY LANE

*The following article has been reproduced from The Victorian Naturalist October 1962 issue, Vol 79 (6)*

### Pink Zieria in Gippsland by Jean Galbraith

We have been used to considering Pink Zieria (*Z. veronica* F. Muell.) as a western Victorian species, though there was an early record from East Gippsland, and recently it has been noted at several places in eastern Victoria, from Providence Ponds to Monkey Creek, near Sale.

It is a very dwarf shrub with softly hairy leaves (rather like those of *Grevillea lanigera*) which are unlike those of other Victorian species of *Zieria* because they are not divided into leaflets. They are a soft grey-green with a strong and pleasant lemon fragrance. In this, plants from all localities agree, though (contrary to what one would expect) plants I have seen from South Australia and the Victorian Mallee have leaves less greyish than those growing in Gippsland. There is however an interesting difference between the pale pink flowers of the Gippsland form and the usually deeper pink flowers of the typical form. The latter open flat into the typical starlike four-petalled flowers of *Zieria*, but those of our Gippsland form have almost always one petal curled so as to appear more or less hooded, and, quite without exception in my experience, the flowers never open flat, but remain as a small rather scanty-looking bell until they fade.

I have noted this in several Gippsland localities; in my own garden, and in that of Mr W Cane, and in both spring and autumn flowers. Though it is spring-flowering, there are some blooms at most other times of year, especially about March and April.

As a further check on the difference between the Mallee and Gippsland forms I asked Mr K Stuckey of Furner, South Australia, for flowering specimens of the South Australian form. He sent a number of flowering sprays. All had the characteristic flat, wide-open flowers of the typical form. It must be admitted that they are more attractive than the pale hooded or cupped flowers of our Gippsland form, but our southern variation is interesting.



## SNACK ON TRACK

While doing 'guard' duty at the Club's photo exhibition at the On Track Gallery at the old Traralgon railway station I was gazing across the tracks towards the platform on the other side – the 'new' Traralgon Railway Station – where a raven perched on the edge of a rubbish bin caught my hitherto wandering attention. It was leaning into the bin, hopping from one spot on the rim to another all the way around inspecting the contents. Finally it came back to the original spot and leaned right in, almost disappearing, and then flew vertically upwards with a plastic supermarket bag in its beak which dropped onto the concrete. The raven promptly attacked the bottom of the bag and managed to tip out a coloured foil packet from the open top, then upended this to scatter the contents – bright yellow bite-size snacks of some sort. Morning tea!

All this activity was being monitored by a nearby magpie, which edged nearer to the scattered feast, but the raven wasn't going to put up with that! However it didn't seem to mind sharing with some of its fellows who had been lurking about on the platform roof above. A station attendant (spoil sport!) appeared from a nearby doorway to pick up the strewn bags and return them to the bin – his body language said he had done this before! The ravens just bided their time up on the roof and flew down again as soon as he had gone.

Suddenly a huge gust of wind blew the remaining snacks off the platform onto the railway lines below, where the magpie and a friend were mooching about, so they snaffled a few before the ravens followed and chased them off again. One just needs to be patient! The ravens cleaned up the last of their nibbles and then all the players in this mini 'drama' quietly melted away, and I turned my attention back to the photographs.

Gill Bremner

## WORKSHOP & CONFERENCE

**Gippsland Environments and Human Interaction: Past, Present and Future**

Workshop: Friday 22 October 2010

Conference: Friday 22 & Saturday 23 Oct

Venue: Monash Uni Gippsland Campus

These academic and community events examine the ways in which the people of Gippsland respond to and interact with the Gippsland environment.

The Gippsland Environments workshop uncovers stories of our Gippsland landscape through an examination of written records and non-textual sources.

The Gippsland Environments conference will consider how the region has shaped the Gippsland people and how they in turn have shaped their surroundings. Conference themes include Aborigines and early Gippsland; the use of natural resources; management of the environment; the landscape, flora and fauna of Gippsland; and conservation and representations of the environment.

For further details and registration contact Dr Julie Fenley on (03) 5122 6320 or email: [Julie.Fenley@monash.edu](mailto:Julie.Fenley@monash.edu)

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The earlier piece about excursion rules from 1966 prompted me to reproduce our current convoy rules to refresh everyone's memories

## CONVOY RULES

Note the vehicles in front and behind your vehicle. Always keep the car behind in sight, especially when at intersections, turning corners or leaving parking areas. When making a turn, give signal in good time and stay in sight in the road into which you have turned until the following car has indicated the turn. On dusty roads space out to enable clear driving vision. Allow sufficient distance between convoy vehicles to allow other vehicles to overtake safely.

If the car behind is lost from view, STOP, PARK SAFELY AND WAIT. The car ahead should be watching you and do likewise. Thus the whole convoy eventually stops, any problem can be rectified, and nobody gets left behind or lost. Use your hazard lights if helpful for safety or emergency reasons.

If you lose contact with the convoy, park safely and wait for someone to find you, if you are not certain of getting to the destination yourself.



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should be addressed to:	Mrs Gill Bremner The Editor LVFNC Inc. PO Box 719 TRARALGON VIC 3844	Phone: 5174 1730  Email: gill@scribex.net
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**Front cover artwork by Beatrice Roberts**  
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NOV-DEC 2010

Issue No. 537



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

- Meeting: Friday 26 November      Impact of Habitat on Insect Communities – Peter O'Donnell
- Excursion: Saturday 27 November      EVENING moth trapping at Morwell NP. Meet 6pm Kerry Rd carpark for tea, BBQ available.
- Bird Group:      Saturday 4 December BIRD CHALLENGE. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)
- Botany Group:      No botany for November due to the bird challenge. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246
- 

### SATURDAY 11 DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS PARTY AT 'EURABBIE' – 12 NOON

See page 6 for details and how to get there.

- Friday 14 January 2011      Summer Members' night – open theme.
- Saturday 15 January 2011      FOBB Wildflower Walk to Mushroom Rocks. Meet 9.30 at DSE Parkers Corner. (Note Saturday not Sunday)
- Friday 21 to Monday 24 January      Summer Camp at Gelantipy – see page 6.
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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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### FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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### FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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### SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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### FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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### HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (JAN-FEB): 31 JANUARY 2011

Subscriptions for 2011-12 will be due 1 March 2011

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

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# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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## LIFE MEMBERSHIPS PRESENTED TO PHIL RAYMENT AND WENDY SAVAGE

Club President David Stickney conferred life memberships on Phil Rayment and Wendy Savage on the occasion of the October general meeting, near the end of an eventful year. Following are some edited excerpts from David's presentation speech.



*Photo: David Stickney*

Many members have made a great contribution towards the success of the club's fiftieth year.

I have singled out two of our members, Wendy and Phil, who have made an enormous contribution to our celebrations. Without their commitment, talent and inspiration we could not have celebrated this year to the high standard that we did.

We acknowledge their contribution not only for this year but for the many years that these two members have been involved in this club.

This anniversary year is an appropriate time for the Club to acknowledge their efforts over many years and in some small way to say thank you. So on behalf of the Club I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation for their contributions over many years.

The rest of the committee members have been planning and discussing this for several months without their knowledge and decided that now was the most appropriate time to confer these life memberships.

Firstly I want to say that life memberships are not given lightly by our Club. We have only conferred life memberships on six members in our 50 year history, the last being Lorna Long in 2003. These new life members will be in good company with previous life memberships conferred on legends of our Club such as Jean Gallbraith and Bon and Ollie Thompson.

The second thing I want to say is that I don't want to downplay the contribution of all the members of our Club. This has been the best Club I have had the privilege to work with.

Thirdly this may not be the first time that two life memberships have been conferred at the same time (two life memberships were conferred in 1967). The reason why we are doing that this year is that they have been a team that has worked together for 20 years and both have had complete confidence and trust in each other.

Turning first to Phil, he has been our longest serving president, for ten years from 1990 to 2000 and currently he is our Vice President No 2. But since retiring as president he has been even more active, becoming involved as club representative on other groups and taking on many new projects.

These activities include:

- In 1991 Club representative on the Matheson Park Development Committee
- In 1996 Club representative on the Latrobe Shire Landscape Master Plan development group
- In 1996 Club representative on the Jungadale Reserve steering committee
- From 2000 advisor to the Latrobe City Trust for the Jean Galbraith scholarship
- In 2001 Club representative on Latrobe City Council Environment Working Group
- In 2003 Club representative on Traralgon Creek Neighborhood Environment Improvement Plan working group
- Member of South Gippsland Conservation Society
- Convenor, planning groups for the 1994 and 2001 VFNCA autumn

camps and the 2010 SEANA spring camp

I think that if we were going to summarise his character we could not improve on what his cousin Bruce said about him – ‘that you were born with your hand up’. I think that describes his nature to get involved in anything where he sees a need. He has an obliging nature and is generous with his time and information. Those characteristics are reflected in both his job and outside interests.

I also think it is those other tasks that he undertakes such as reading and giving critiques on reports that he is often asked to review often go unrecognized.

Wendy has been our longest serving secretary - for 18 years since 1992 which is over a third of the club's life. She took the role on at a time when the Club was desperate for someone to take on that position. However it's not about the length of time that she has occupied that role, it's about the achievements she has made during that time:

- Set new benchmarks for efficiency in her secretarial role
- VFNCA secretary for a term (1990's)
- Developed a kit used by all SEANA camps
- Taken a leading role (with Phil) in all our VFNCA/SEANA camps - Eden on the Pond (1994), Rawson (2001), Camp Rumbug (2010)
- So often fall back person to do write ups if there was no volunteer
- Member of the Earls Road Landcare Group
- Member of the Baw Baw Sustainability Group

One of her friends described her as ‘Wonder Woman’ for all the groups that she is involved with and the enthusiasm and organizational skills she brings to those roles.

The last couple of years are examples of the achievements that they have completed when they have both worked together.

A few years ago we produced ‘The Nature of Latrobe’. Many of our club members contributed towards the book but it was

Wendy and Phil who first of all provided the inspiration, and then the planning, coordination and editing of it. The result was a competently edited booklet that without their skill and experience would not be such a professional looking publication.

This year we've undertaken two major projects that they both have been deeply committed to and involved in. The first was the history book ‘The First Fifty Years of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club’. This was a huge task that involved a great deal of time, energy, commitment and talent and Phil single handedly did much of the research and wrote all the new text. But it was Wendy who helped with the editing and expertly did the design and layout. This was a great team effort.

All this culminated in the SEANA Camp in which again Wendy and Phil took a leadership role. As I said before it was a great success with many compliments coming from the participants.

In presenting these certificates I would like to acknowledge the beautiful artwork by Beatrice Roberts and the elegant calligraphy by Ken Smith.

I also acknowledge the support that Ken and Gill have provided during this period.

Lorna Long, our most recent life member, presented the certificates.

## **LVFNC HISTORY 1960-2010 PUBLISHED**

The history of our club's first fifty years 1960-2010, ‘To Protect and Enjoy’, was published just in time for release at the SEANA Spring Camp in mid-October.

The book of sixty pages was authored/edited by Phil Rayment with contributions from Bon Thompson and Lorna Long and the many club members and friends whose articles, originally published in the LV Naturalist, have been included. Wendy Savage applied her talents to the design and layout, having sourced a great collection of photographs. The book is enhanced by Beatrice Roberts' delightful drawings of flora and fauna.

Printed locally by PAZZAZ printing of Morwell, the book is available to members for \$5 (subsidised price as part of our



anniversary celebrations) and others for \$10. Add \$2.50 if postage and handling are involved.

## KOALAS ON SNAKE ISLAND

Ross Williamson of Parks Victoria, Foster gave a most interesting account of the history and management of the koala population on Snake Island. Snake Island, at 3400 ha, is the largest sand island in Victoria.

By the 1920s koalas had been hunted nearly to extinction for their pelts. It is estimated that there were about 500 left in the wild. In the 1890s two young koalas had been introduced to French Island founding the prosperous population of that Island. It remains the only *Chlamydia*-free population of koalas. A state wide program was begun to re-establish the koala population in Victoria using the French Island population as the source stock.

65 koalas from Phillip Island and 64 from French Island were taken to Snake Island in 1945. There were additional introductions in 1955 and 1963, but it was not until the 1980s that they became numerous. By 1992 there was at least one koala in every Manna gum. Significant damage was being done as koalas literally eat the tree canopy from the inside out culminating in complete tree kill. This resulted in many koala deaths by starvation.

A program was begun to address this problem with the short term objective of getting the population below the island's carrying capacity and the long term objective of removing all koalas from Snake Island.

The tactics involved:

1. Relocation
2. Female surgical sterilization
3. Female hormonal implants
4. Male vasectomies

The process had to be acceptable in terms of animal well being, so Springtime with warmer weather and no frosts, and the existing young starting to wean before the breeding season begins again is most suitable.

A horseman acts as a koala spotter marking each tree and a route to the track. This is followed up with teams of skilled tree

climbers and catchers on quad bikes. The climber uses a telescopic pole with a rope and knotted noose, to prevent the koala choking. The noose is placed over the neck then the pole passed to the ground crew. The climber flags the koala out of the tree using a silhouette of an owl. The process only takes a few seconds. The ground crew catch the koala and put it in a hessian bag till it quietsens before it is placed in a koala box and fed. Koalas need regular feeding with fresh manna gum leaves. The koalas are then taken to a hut set up for sterilisation before relocation to the mainland. They are relocated north of the Princes Highway to protect the gene pool of the Strzelecki group. Meticulous records of all procedures are kept.

This process was later modified to catching and sterilising animals, releasing and monitoring them on the island for nine months before recapturing for relocation.

The tubal ligation of females and male vasectomy are "keyhole" procedures carried out under anaesthetic by a vet.

Much research has been carried out using radio collars and the Mark-recapture technique enables estimates of the population to be made.

The indicators of the success of the program are:

1. The falling fecundity rate of all females caught. It is now approaching 0% from a high of 39.4% in 1997.
2. The high proportion of sterile animals in each year's catch (In 2009, 90% of all females caught are sterile).
3. The falling population estimate (1512 in 2000 to 294 in 2007 using the Mark-recapture technique).
4. The improved condition of the Manna gums. The habitat condition is the best measure of success. The Manna gum is recovering and seed trees are being "tree guarded".

The program is clearly achieving its aims.

Ken Savage

## CHRISTMAS PARTY - DECEMBER 11

At the Savages', Yarragon Sth from 12 noon. See back page for more details.

## SEANA SPRING CAMP 2010 – SOUTH GIPPSLAND

Our club hosted the SEANA Spring 2010 gathering of field naturalists over the extended weekend of Friday 15<sup>th</sup> – Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October, based at Camp Rumbug, Foster North. The program of excursions, talks and displays was well received by 102 participants and some additional folk who came along for individual activities. Some came from far afield – we welcomed two South Australians, members of the Naracoorte-Lucindale Field Naturalists Society, and several naturalists from the Sunraysia and Albury/ Wodonga clubs, for instance.

Facing up to the intermittently rainy and blustery weather, as field naturalists do, participants chose from twenty-one full and half day excursions offered across Saturday and Sunday and from four Monday morning options. Along with a range of excursions in Wilsons Promontory NP, areas visited included Duck Point near Yanakie, Bald Hills and Tarwin Lower, Walkerville – for both heathland plants and coastal geology, Mt Nicoll and Mt Hoddle, bushland reserves around Foster, the Toora bird hide, Agnes Falls, Port Albert's Old Port Trail, McLaughlins Beach and the Won Wron Forest – for a feast of orchids. There was also an opportunity to join the Friends of Morwell NP for their annual Koala count on the Sunday afternoon. The Monday morning excursions focused on the Inverloch-Wonthaggi region, taking in the Screw Creek coastal trail, the Bunurong cliffs, the Wonthaggi Heathlands and Baxters Wetlands. Many of the excursions were ably led by club members, but we owe special thanks to the "South Gippslanders" Mary Ellis, Terri Allen, Jenny Rejske, Gary Wallis, Susan Taylor, Eulalie Brewster and the local geologist Harley Veitch who so willingly and enthusiastically strengthened the program's focus on the region to our south. We were keen to have such a focus for this camp, as the previous VFNCA camps that we hosted were based in Central Gippsland (in 1994) and the Baw Baw Plateau and foothills (in 2001).

To introduce the celebratory theme of our club's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year as part of the

Friday evening welcome, Ken Harris gave an excellent presentation based on the ninety or so best-rated photographs from our recent highly successful competition, and I gave a short talk on the club's first fifty years. On Saturday evening, geologist Gary Wallis gave a masterly and well-illustrated talk on the geomorphology and geology of South Gippsland. The Sunday evening speaker was Duncan Malcolm AM, the widely respected first Chair of the Gippsland Coastal Board, who set out for us the considerable management challenges facing Gippsland's coasts, not least being the greatly accelerated erosion processes expected as a consequence of sea level rise.

As convener of the camp planning working party, I would like to sincerely thank the many members who contributed to a great event – the excursion leaders and facilitators, those who assisted with such things as registration and displays at camp and in particular the other working party members – Wendy Savage (as ever a tower of strength), Ken Savage, David Mules (our efficient camp treasurer), David Stickney, Jackie Tims and Gill Bremner. We acknowledge also the efforts of Matt Wallis and his very obliging staff at Camp Rumbug, a very suitable venue for the camp.

We anticipate publishing write-ups of some of the excursions in future issues.

Philip Rayment

## WON WRON SF SEPTEMBER 2010

Won Wron Forest was an attractive venue for our September outing because lots of wildflowers were in bloom. In the more open areas on the outskirts of the reserve there were large patches of purple *Hardenbergia*, draping over anything handy, and at ground level there were patches of red Running Postman flowers. Within the forest there were numerous *Indigofera australis* bushes covered in pinkish mauve flowers. And blue Love Creeper was around too.

We approached the reserve from the east side, generally following Napier Rd with brief diversions at O'Rourke's Rd, Dog Trap Rd, and along an old rail trial.

Initially the tree canopy was mainly Narrow-leaved Peppermint, *Eucalyptus radiata*, and

later on there were Messmate, *E. obliqua* and Apple Box, *E. bridgesiana*. Saw Banksia, *B. serrata* was prevalent in some areas too.

At the first stop on Napier Rd there was a large patch of White Fingers, *Caladenia catenata*, making quite a show, and also here and there occasional mauve-coloured Waxlips, *Glossodia major*.

Through the day, we encountered several other *Caladenias* of the Finger or Fairy types. These included Musky *Caladenia*, *C. gracilis*. Its flower is pale inside becoming pink towards the tips, and a brownish or greenish tinge outside. There were also some Pink Fingers, *C. carnea* here and there. At Dog Trap Rd there was another *Caladenia*, *C. clarkiae*, which has pinkish petals and sepals, darker towards the tips. The labellum has long thin teeth along its edges. Yet another *Caladenia* was Dusky Fingers, *C. fuscata*, which has bright pink flowers with side lobes on the labellum that protrude forward of it.

A blue orchid that appeared similar to the *Caladenias* was Blue Beard or Blue Fairies, *Cyanicula deformis*. It is characterised by lots of dark blue calli on the labellum.

The greatest interest for the day was the Thick-lipped Spider Orchid,

*Caladenia tessellata*, which of national interest because of its rarity. This orchid has a heart-shaped labellum with numerous brown club-shaped calli giving a tessellated appearance. Another Spider Orchid, seen on Dog Trap Rd, was *Caladenia australis* which is characterised by pale drooping lateral sepals with thick brown clubs on the ends and its labellum is dark maroon.

We saw two species of *Diuris*. Leopard Orchid, *D. pardina* was at the first stop and also at White Woman's Waterhole, the later specimen having 9 flowers on one stem. Elsewhere we saw *D. orientis*, Wallflower Orchid, whose brown patches are more blurred than on *D. pardina*.

One should also mention Brown Beaks, *Lyperanthus suaveolens*, which were partially open. Their long brown lateral sepals and petals are quite distinctive.

As well as the more exotic orchids there were a number of less showy species including 7 species of *Pterostylis*, or Greenhood. It was of interest to distinguish between two species that were formerly called Tall Greenhood. *P. chlorogramma* has flanges under the hood with a gap between them and the hood bulges somewhat, whereas *P. melagramma* has flanges that have no gap between.

Overall Ken Smith showed us 24 orchid species and it was a challenge to deal with so many, especially with the names being subject to change.

Ron Carey



Bluebeard Orchid

Photo: Phil Rayment

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 20.10.2010

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 26 November:** Impact of Habitat on Insect Communities – Peter O'Donnell

**Saturday 27 November:** Moth Trapping in Morwell NP. Meet 6PM for tea Kerry Rd carpark. BBQ available, BYO food etc.

**Saturday 4 December:** Bird Challenge – Alix will have sign in sheets at GM.

**Saturday 11 December:** Club Christmas Party at 'Eurabbie', Yarragon South, from 12 noon.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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**Friday 14 January 2011:** Summer Members' Night – open theme.

**Saturday 15 January 2011:** Wildflower Walk to Mushroom Rocks, Baw Baw NP with FOBB.

**21-24 January 2011:** Club Summer Camp at Gelantipy. Details – see below.

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1225.53. Investment A/c \$12,111.01.

**Motion:** Recommend subscriptions for 2011 increase to \$35 single, \$50 family, \$25 student, \$20 Naturalist. D Mules/P Rayment, carried unanimously.

## **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

SEANA camp – very successful. Favourable comments from participants and leaders alike. Guest speakers were excellent. 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations were well integrated. Camp Rumbug was very good venue with helpful staff. Participants were well distributed over the excursions. Financial report and updated database to be finalized. Final meeting 3 November at David Mules'.

Club History published. 200 printed. Sold 27 copies at camp. Will put order form in Naturalist. Phil to investigate postage costs. Send copies to National Library, Centre for Gippsland Studies and local libraries.

Latrobe City Council Community Directory – have registered our concern re lack of process and consultation with our entry being removed, and have put LVFNC details back on directory.

Photo competition – photos to be returned. Best 96 photos can be put on CD for members. Will find out if they can be easily put on a DVD.

Program planning meeting 27 October at Lorna Long's – 6pm for tea and 7.30 for meeting.

Summer Camp at Gelantipy 21-24 January 2011. Accommodation at Karoonda Park. Have booked family cabins. All bedding is supplied. Price \$30/person/night. Motel suites (2) are \$70 a double. Booked catered evening meal Sat & Sun at \$25/person/meal. List at GM.

Eric Lubcke Reserve – draft sign has been prepared by Simon Clark for comment. Will reply that we are happy with it – it uses text on earlier sign.

Julie Tyrrell, Bushfire Projects Coordinator – South Gippsland Shire Council has requested

a meeting with us regarding a Flora & Fauna project at Lyrebird Walk. Requested more details.

Purple Diuris orchid count Longford Tuesday 26 October 10am.

## **Conservation Matters**

DSE Fire Operation plans. Monitoring pre and post burn plots in the Thomson and Tanjil areas. Offer for LVFNC to be involved. Jackie will ask for more information.

Request from Suzy Zent for LVFNC to support an application for funding to protect koala habitat in the Strzeleckis and maybe manage the grant as an incorporated body. Invite her to the November meeting to discuss further.

Forest Stewardship Councillors visiting next Tuesday (clash with orchid count). Suzy invites members to join inspection visits.

## **SUMMER CAMP AT GELANTIPY**

**Friday 21 to Monday 24 January 2011**

Karoonda Park – family cabins with 2-3 bedrooms for 4-6 people. All bedding is supplied. Cooking facilities available.

Price - \$30/person/night

Catered evening meal Sat & Sun at \$25/person/meal. BYO food for breakfasts and lunches. List at GM or contact Wendy.

## **BIRD CHALLENGE SAT 4<sup>TH</sup> DEC**

Full details contact Alix Williams 51273393

Email: [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

## **CHRISTMAS PARTY SAT 11<sup>TH</sup> DEC**

Come from 12 noon, BYO food and drinks, table and chairs. Punch and Christmas cake provided, boiling water, tea and coffee, and BBQ available. And of course the QUIZ!

**Where – Yarragon Sth.** Heading west from Trafalgar on Princes Hwy, turn LEFT into Sunny Creek Rd, then RIGHT into Roaches Rd, and then (very soon) LEFT into Earls Rd. Drive about 5km uphill to the first gate after the hilltop communications tower on the left – shingle indicates EURABBIE – SAVAGES.

## **FROM THE EDITOR**

A big thank you to everyone for their help and contributions during the year. I would like to wish all club members, family and friends a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Next General Meeting is the Members' Night on January 14, and the January-February Naturalist will be posted in early February.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number has changed.

Full Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Private) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$50 ☐ Single \$35 ☐ Junior/Student \$25 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

CHEQUE ENCLOSED \$ (Made payable to LVFNC Inc)

Subscriptions are due on March 1<sup>st</sup> each year. (Half fees apply for those joining after 31<sup>st</sup> August)

LATROBE VALLEY NATURALIST

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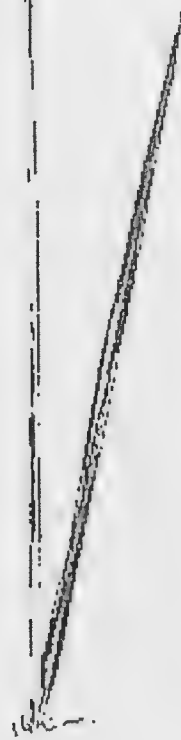


JAN-FEB 2011

Issue No. 538



# *Latrobe Valley* *Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 25 February

Excursion: Saturday 26 February

Baw Baw Plateau History – Bill Lay & Neville Daly

McLaughlins Beach. Meet 10am at Yarram Country Club/Bowling Club on Sth Gippsland Hwy south of shopping centre. For car-pooling meet Mexican Restaurant, cnr Princes Hwy and Whittakers Rd Traralgon at 9.15am.

Bird Group:

Tuesday 1 March Glengarry wetlands. Meet by 8.30 near Tyers General Store. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw46@netspace.net.au](mailto:alixw46@netspace.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 5 March. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 1 APRIL

Excursion: Saturday 2 APRIL

AGM. Geology of Sth Gippsland – Garry Wallis

Bunurong Cliffs Geology Excursion. Meet 10am at Bunurong Environment Centre, Inverloch.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Maurice Poulton ☎ 5625 1293 or 5777 5297

---

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 18 MARCH 2011

Subscriptions for 2011-12 due 1 March 2011 – see inside back cover for new amounts.

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

## CLUB HISTORY ERRATUM

On page 49 of the recently published club history *To Protect and Enjoy*, the caption for the image of the life membership certificate for Bon and Ollie Thompson incorrectly attributes the painting of the Large Duck Orchid to Beatrice Roberts. This was in fact the work of artist Val Voysey, to whom we offer our apology for the error.

Philip Rayment

## VALE JIM BLUCHER

James (Jim) Blucher, a committed club member for many years, passed away on 22 November, 2010, at the age of 81 years.

An electrical engineer with the State Electricity Commission of Victoria until his retirement, Jim with Florence, his wife of 56 years lived in the Jeeralangs from 1963, raising their three sons and establishing a fine garden, the setting for a number of club Christmas parties over the years.

Jim's many club involvements included working with Bon Thompson as Assistant Conservation Coordinator during much of the 1980s and 1990s, and representing the club on various consultative committees such as the Morwell Open Cut and Overburden Rehabilitation Committee and the Central Gippsland Forest Management Area Advisory Committee, in the latter case thereby contributing to the development of the Forest Management Plan for the Central Highlands published in 1998.

Jim had a wide range of interests and hobbies – he and Florence were active in the development of the Morwell Centenary Rose Garden, and many members will be aware of his splendid and meticulous woodcraft depiction of birds and other fauna.

The club extends sincere condolences to Florence and family. A good many members attended the commemoration of Jim's life in Traralgon on 30 November.

## GRAMPIANS GALLIVANTING

(13 – 19 September 2010)

Fine weather, eighteen enthusiastic participants, excellent accommodation (Halls Haven), flowers and birds galore –

what could be better than the Grampians in springtime?

Our convoy visited parts north of Halls Gap, including the Illawarra Nature Reserve, Clifton Park Reserve, McCann Reserve and Ironbark Nature Walk, Deep Lead NCR and Devil's Gardens, as well as Heatherlie Quarry (great history), Mt Zero and Lakes Lonsdale and Fyans. The party split one day, one group exploring Wonderland and the Brambuk Centre, the other orchiding at Mirranatwa Gap, Henham Corner and along Serra Road.

Lower damper areas were ablaze with lilies: Sheath Star, Blue Star, Nodding Blue-lily, Chocolate Lily, Milkmaids, Early Nancy, Twining Fringe-lily, Bulbine Lily and Dwarf Wire-lily. The orchid count included Common Bird Orchid, Fringed Hare-orchid, Blue and Tiny Caladenias, Pink Fingers, Blue Caladenia, Mantis Orchid, Veined, Tawny and Grampians Spider-orchids, Waxlip, Dwarf, Tiny, Swan, Nodding, Tall, Blunt, Banded and Bearded Greenhoods, Gnat and Mosquito Orchids and Golden Moths.

Perhaps the most stunning display was put on by the wattles; we identified nineteen varieties, including Ploughshare and Mitchell's Wattle and the best Myrtle Wattle we had ever seen. The peas (egg and bacon types) were as baffling as ever, as were the guineaflowers.

Not to be outdone by the botanists, the birdos clocked up one hundred species, the most exciting sightings being an Emu dad with young, Musk Duck, Black-fronted Dotterel, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Fuscous Honeyeater, Mistletoe Bird and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike. Most dominant were the drifts of screaming kamikaze Long-billed Corellas, stark white against the blue ranges, but close up deserving of their nick-name 'Cut-throats'.

Calling frogs, a Stumpy-tail Lizard, Eastern and Western Grey Kangaroos, Echidna, Red-necked Swamp Wallabies . . . but the highlight for me was Scale Shredder, closely followed by Turret Arrowgrass.

Terri G Allen

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## *DIURIS punctata* COUNT 2010

Members of Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists Club who attended on either day included Bruce and Estelle Adams, Andrew, Brian and Heather Green, Ken Harris, David Mules, Ralph and Joan Laby, Ken Smith, John Topp, Wendy Savage and Helen Isakson. We were also pleased to have two visitors Ruth and Ivor Graney from the Portland Field Naturalists who had stayed over for a few days after the SEANA camp. They helped us with the Dawson count.

### DAWSON – 20 October 2010

South Side	21	
+ just outside marked areas	2	
North Side	167	
+ outside marked areas SW	4	
+ outside marked areas NE	24	
Total for Dawson		218

### LONGFORD – 26 October 2010

S/w end of road to West notice	4020	
North side of road	76	
Area between notices (Sth side)	278	
Nth side of road b/n markers	1810	6184
Eastern Area from Chessum Road		
South Side to second pole	2050	
South Side past second pole	1821	
Fenced area on nth side of road	1031	
Just outside fenced area (adj to road)	15	4917
Total for Longford Road		11101

I visited the Dawson site 2 weeks before the survey and it was then still incredibly dry, despite the extensive rain elsewhere in the district, but on the day of the survey there was evidence of some significant rain. It was not surprising that the counts for Dawson were very low. The South side was particularly poor, with only 21 plants found compared with 169 the previous year. The North side gave a better count, only just below the 2009 total, with 167 compared with 196 in 2009. There seems to be a movement towards the eastern end, with most of the plants being found toward that end and with some 24 plants being detected outside the marked area in the NE corner. It is worth noting that the spread of *Diuris sulphurea* plants into the Northern area is continuing. This year 6 *D sulphurea* plants

were found in the middle of the marked area and another 23 outside but near to the NE corner were observed this time in the North-east corner of the North Side marked area. The main concern with *D sulphurea* is that *D sulphurea* plants in bud might be mistaken for *D punctata*, and vice versa. This did not seem to be a problem this year. The *D sulphurea* plants were well enough advanced even if still in bud to be easily recognised.

The Longford Road count, a week later, gave a very different picture. We started counting the NW road edge, which is not one of the best segments, and found it reduced from 125 to 76, but all the other sections showed considerable improvement. At Tanjil Road, the count increased from 3723 in 2009 to 6184 and at Chessum Road from 3891 to 4917. The overall total for Longford Road was 11101 plants, an increase of 3482 over last year's 7619, and the second highest count since the Longford survey began in 1993. The only higher count was in 2004 when a staggering 15711 plants were counted.

The Burgan plants sprayed around the Tanjil Road site are showing signs of coming back from their roots, so the spraying was not entirely successful. It is hoped that Vic Roads will retreat this area later this summer after the orchids have completed the flowering and seeding cycle.

Ken Harris

## THE NEED TO RESTORE NATIVE VEGETATION

Peter O'Donnell spoke to members and visitors at our November meeting. Peter is a PhD student at Monash University Gippsland. His thesis area is in the conservation of Biological Resources.

His subject matter concerned the agricultural and ecological perspectives of revegetation. The main focus here in the talk presented was the impact of land management practices on invertebrate communities. A summary of results with bar graph statistics obtained from actual land trials was presented. This fieldwork was conducted at Giffard in south Gippsland, and shows work conducted on selected pasture and native

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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vegetation, the latter which comprised revegetated strips and remnant heathy woodlands. The talk was illustrated with some outstanding macro images of useful invertebrates encountered and systematically collected during the study.

Modern agricultural thinking practice may inadvertently lead to loss of natural ecosystem functions due to overuse/misuse of insecticides, pesticides and fertilisers.

Alternatively, biological control of pasture pests (including mites, aphids, snails, caterpillars, grasshoppers and their larvae) can be an efficient, low cost alternative to the multi-cropping farmer.

Natural predators of pasture pests discussed in the talk were Beetles, Flies, Wasps and Spiders.

Some species of the above can be highly beneficial if viable populations can be maintained.

The influence of birds in terms of their mobility and preferred habitat also should not be underestimated. Insectivorous birds, although they will take the occasional beneficial invertebrate, are more likely to feed on pest insects because of the pest insect's high population density as compared to the beneficials. So it could be concluded that having insectivorous birds on farms is a good natural control of pest insects.

Bird populations flourish in well-sheltered revegetated land.

## **Recommendations for land owners seeking to spray agricultural chemicals.**

Always try to leave a 20 to 80 metre wide buffer zone adjacent to restored native vegetation. This action may benefit agricultural pasture by:-

- 1.Reducing the dose of insecticide needed with a resulting lesser pollution effect on land and water along with a lower capital cost of chemicals.

- 2.This will help maintain a continuous reservoir of beneficial invertebrates.

Questions from members and farmers present were numerous and were well

answered by our guest speaker. Overall, a well-prepared and most informative talk.

Lawrie Waddington

## **PLEASE NOTE CHANGED DATES**

The March General Meeting and AGM, and the excursion, have been moved to 1 & 2 April to avoid a clash with the SEANA Autumn Camp at Anglesea. The April GM and excursion have been moved to 29 & 30 April because of the clash with Easter.

## **REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 22.11.2010**

### **General Meetings & Excursions**

**Friday 25 February:** Baw Baw Plateau History – Bill Lay & Neville Daly

**Saturday 26 February:** McLaughlins Beach. Meet 10am Yarram Country Club/Bowling Club on Sth Gippsland Hwy south of shopping centre. For carpooling meet 9.15 Mexican Restaurant carpark, cnr Princes Hwy & Whittakers Rd, Traralgon.

**Friday 1 APRIL: AGM.** Geology of South Gippsland – Gary Wallis

**Saturday 2 APRIL:** Bunurong Cliffs geology excursion. Meet 10am at Bunurong Environment Centre, Inverloch.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 5 March 10am. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 1 March – Glengarry Wetlands. Meet by 8.30am near Tyers General Store.

**SEANA Autumn Camp:** 25-28 March at Anglesea.

**Finance.** – Balances: Club A/c \$484.44. Investment A/c \$11,511.01.

### **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

SEANA camp finalization. Report in Naturalist. 102 attendees with extras attending some excursions. Have covered expenses and made a profit to be shared between our club and SEANA.

Club History published. Info re purchase in Naturalist. Postage will be \$1.80 so will charge extra \$2.50 to cover packaging. Phil

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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sent copies to National Library, Centre for Gippsland Studies and Latrobe City Library.

Photo competition – best 96 photos have been put on CD for members. Will charge \$3. Ken Harris will produce 20 at this stage.

Julie Tyrrell, Bushfire Projects Co-ordinator – South Gippsland Shire Council had requested a meeting with us regarding a Flora and Fauna project at Lyrebird Walk. Requested more details but have heard nothing more.

Purple Diuris orchid count results – for full details see Ken Harris's report on page 1. Records have been sent to relevant people and organizations.

Program for 2011 draft has been completed. Will be printed for handing out at GM.

Summer Camp at Gelantipy 21-24 January 2011. 13 on list. Excursions planned.

Jean Galbraith Scholarship applications have been sent out and close 1 February.

Club History book – Mary Austin noted error on Life Membership certificate to Bon and Ollie was incorrectly attributed to Beatrice Roberts instead of Val Voysey. Will put an erratum in the Naturalist.

ANH medallion awarded to Don Sands, dinner attended by John and Helen Poppins.

## Conservation Matters

DSE Fire Operation plans. Monitoring pre and post burn plots in the Thomson and Tanjil areas. Offer for LVFNC to be involved. More info sought – still pending.

Request from Suzy Zent for LVFNC to support an application for funding to protect koala habitat in the Strzeleckis. Suzy unavailable for meeting this month, but hopes to come in March. Would like some assistance putting in the application. Smartwood auditor visit due week starting December 6.

Australian Paper Community consultative Committee – John Poppins reported that a representative from the LVFNC is written into the new draft constitution and requested our opinion on it remaining. A CCC member thought position should only specify an environment group. We consider it

appropriate as our club is the only broad purview environmental group in the district. Important that we continue to provide a committed representative in the future.

## FOR THE DIARY

**SEANA Autumn camp** at Anglesea hosted by Angair – Friday 25 to Monday 28 March. For information: phone 5263 1085  
Email: [admin@angair.org.au](mailto:admin@angair.org.au)

**Club AGM APRIL 1** – change is due to clash with the SEANA camp. Positions up for re-election are: President, VP1, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer.

**April General Meeting** and excursion have been moved to **29 & 30 April** because of clash with Easter.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2011-12

Please note that subs are now due and there has been a small increase from last year. For information see inside back cover.

## MEMBERS' NIGHT JANUARY 2011 by Ken Harris

Our meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> January was a members' night and 5 members made 20 minute presentations:

### David Mules – Butterflies

David Mules presented first. Having acquired his first digital camera to photograph birds, he found there are not always birds around to photograph and started photographing butterflies as well. Most of the pictures he showed us were from Mackay in Queensland, so he had a great array of butterflies to choose from, though he did include a few taken at home in Narracan. He observed how hard the skippers are to identify and only showed us one, but he showed us a great array of nymphs, swallowtails, whites and a few blues. He showed many beautiful butterflies and one moth, the Zodiac Moth (*Alcides metaurus*) which is incredibly like a swallowtail butterfly. Outstanding among the butterflies he showed us were the Ulysses Swallowtail (*Papilio ulysses*), Green-spotted Triangle (*Graphium agamemnon*) and the Chequered Swallowtail (*Papilio demoleus*).



## **Ken Harris – Mothing in Morwell National Park**

I came next. For our field outing on 27<sup>th</sup> November, I had given a demonstration of attracting moths to a sheet lit by a Mercury Vapour Light in Morwell National Park. It proved to be a very wet evening and so very few Field Nats turned up that night. The same did not apply to the moths and a variety of different moths came to the party. Altogether I photographed 50 different moth species that evening and several other unusual visitors. My presentation displayed a selection of the moths and other insects from that demonstration. 8 of the moths were species not previously seen in the park, including the Pond Moth (*Hygraula nitens*), a surprising moth whose caterpillars live in ponds and streams, and the colourful Golden Leaf Moth (*Wingia aurata*). Another surprising visitor was a Diving Beetle (*Dysticidae*). Both adults and larvae spend most of their life under water, so it was an unexpected visitor to Fosters Gully. I finished by showing an enormous Helena Gum-moth (*Opodiphthera helena*) which I photographed in the park on 16<sup>th</sup> December.

## **Wendy Savage – Trekking to the ruined Inca city of Choquequirao in Peru.**

When Wendy and Ken Savage visited the Galapagos, they also spent some time walking in Peru. They chose a trek that was not too strenuous so they could potter along and have time to look at the birds and plants. They thought this trek should be OK as they didn't have any high passes to cross and it was over 5 days, but what they didn't realise was that they had an enormously deep canyon to descend into and climb out of both going and returning. The depth of the canyon was between 1750 and 1950 m, depending which direction they were walking. Wendy showed us pictures of the fantastic scenery along their walk. There were just the two of them. With a guide, a cook and a horseman and four mules. Three mules to carry the luggage and one for emergencies, ie for carrying the trekkers. Both walked most of the distance, but each had a short ride on the mule on the way. Wendy took a few plant photos near the start, but there just wasn't time with such a long walk to complete each day. They did

get to see an Andean Condor during the first day's walk. They completed the walking on schedule and had one day to explore the ruined city of Choquequirao, before starting the long strenuous return trek.

## **Phil Rayment – Walking in Northern Slovenia**

Phil Rayment spoke about a week that he and Gill spent walking in the north and west of Slovenia in July last year, from a base in Kranjska Gora, a small town in the Sava Dolinka Valley north of the Julian Alps and south of the Karavanke chain. The Triglav National Park of area 84000 ha encompasses most of the Julian Alps, including Slovenia's highest peak, Mt Triglav (2864 m). Of particular interest were the descent back into Slovenia from the Pec summit where the borders of Austria, Italy and Slovenia meet, the beautiful Savica waterfall above Lake Bohinj, the Vintgar Gorge of the Radovna River near Bled and the Pericnik waterfalls in the Vrata Valley near Mt Triglav. Phil concluded his talk with a few photos from the Postojna cave system, one of the world's largest karst caves, hollowed out by the Pivka River and around 2 million years old. The blind Salamander, *Proteus anguinus*, endemic to Slovenia, lives in pools in these caves.

## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

The fifth talk by David Stickney on Great Albatrosses will appear next issue – I'm afraid the index had to take precedence.

## **SIGNIFICANT BIRTHDAYS**

Congratulations to Life Members Bon and Ollie Thompson who have both recently celebrated their 90<sup>th</sup> birthdays, with Bon's on Australia Day. A cheerful crowd of 28 club members met in Traralgon on Saturday January 29 for afternoon tea to mark this special occasion and wish them both many more happy and healthy years.

We also extend our very best wishes to Florence Blucher on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **LOST PROPERTY**

Left behind at Bon and Ollie's birthday bash at Phil and Gill's – 2 small pale green china bowls. I will bring them along to the next general meeting.

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## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

### DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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MARCH 2011

Issue No. 539



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 1 APRIL

AGM. Geology of South Gippsland – Gary Wallis

Excursion: Saturday 2 APRIL

Bunurong Cliffs Geology Excursion. Meet 10am at Bunurong Environment Centre, Inverloch.

**Please note the unusual April meeting dates - due to SEANA Camp and Easter clashes.**

Bird Group:

Tuesday 5 April Morwell River Wetlands. Meet at gate on Strzelecki Hwy by 9.30 EST. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 9 April wetland plants at Heyfield Wetlands. Meet there at 10am or carpool Traralgon Mexican Restaurant 9.15. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 29 April

Natural History of Madagascar – David Mules, David Stickney and Ken Harris

Excursion: Saturday 30 April

Toorongo Falls. Meet 10am at the Noojee Hotel.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

---

FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

---

FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

---

FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

---

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

---

FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

---

SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

---

FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

---

HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

---

FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 15 APRIL 2011**

Subscriptions for 2011-12 due 1 March 2011 – see inside back cover for new amounts.

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>



## NOVEMBER EXCURSION – MOTH TRAPPING IN MORWELL NP

When I go moth trapping, I try and pick the weather, but when giving a demonstration I don't have that power. Our November excursion fell on a Saturday with the worst forecast for some time and the weathermen were right. It stayed dry most of the day but as evening approached the rain arrived with a vengeance.

The prospect of a barbecue in the rain had no great appeal, but I duly turned up at 6.00 pm, complete with my barbecue meal. When I arrived the Morwell National Park ranger, Bronwyn Grass was there, but nobody else!

Nobody else turned up for 40 minutes, so I was hoping that my audience had opted out of the barbecue, but would come along a bit later to see me attract moths in the rain. That proved to be the case and first Ray And Delma arrived having fed at home, to be followed by Doug and then Marja and Jack. I resigned myself to just eating my salad and leaving my ham steaks and onion uncooked, but Delma produced a large umbrella and offered to cook my meal, so I alone did have a barbecue tea with great thanks to Delma.

Bronwyn, brought more chairs down from the Park office and a small ladder and assisted while I set up my sheet, generator and Mercury Vapour Light, all safely inside the information shelter. There was just enough room in front of the sheet for my chair (in the dry).

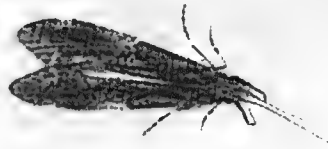
It was about 8.15 when I fired up the generator, but for a while only tiny flies were attracted by the light. It was 8.35 before I found something of interest, but it was only a very small Mirid bug, that I photographed.

The first moth to arrive came at 8.44, so it was a very slow beginning. The first arrival was quite a small moth, one of the Oecophoridae, the Concealer Moths. It was one that I knew, *Barea codrella* (very few of the smaller moths have common names).

From then on things began to pick up and more and more moths began to appear, although the smaller ones remained the majority. Ten or more different little members of the Oecophoridae put in an

appearance and no really large moths appeared. The Black Geometrid – *Melanodes anthracitaria*, which is almost completely black was probably the largest that we saw.

We did not only attract moths and it was intriguing to find that Caddis-flies were quite common on the sheet with three or more different species. Caddis-fly larvae are only found in water and the Kerry Road Picnic Area is not close to any water suitable for growing caddis-flies.



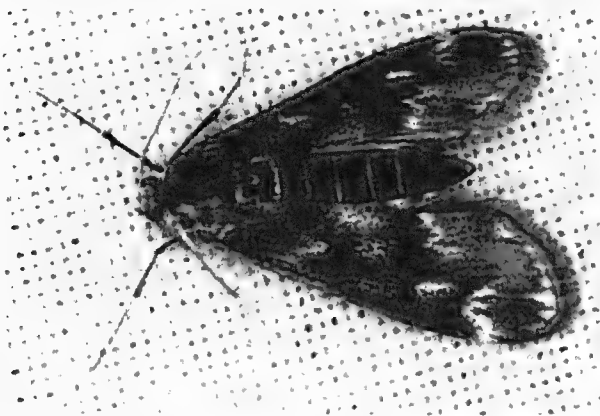
They are mostly very hard to identify as adults, but I believe this one to be *Trileptodes similis*. Some of the caddis-flies can be confused with some of the smaller moths, but they mostly have quite long forward pointing antennae.

Caddis-flies were not the only water insects to visit us that evening. This Diving Beetle



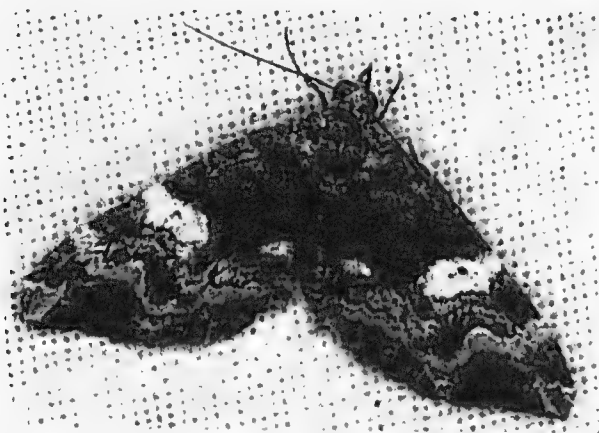
also came to the sheet. These beetles live in streams even as adults, being well -known for diving below the surface carrying with them a bubble of air. They nevertheless do disperse by flying and I have now seen three species when attracting moths, none of them close to water. I have not yet been able to identify this one. Note that its hind legs are adapted for swimming.

Moths are generally not associated with water, but Australia has at least one moth that grows its caterpillars in ponds and streams. I had never previously seen the Pond Moth or Australian Water Moth – *Hygraula nitens*, but one came to the sheet on Saturday.



This moth is a member of the Crambidae.

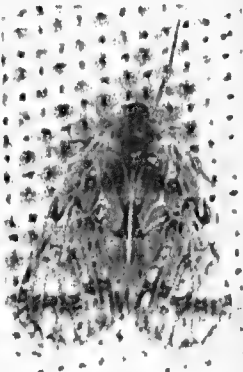
One moth that we saw is one of great interest to me, because when I first found one in Lyndon's Clearing last year, it was the first record for the species in Victoria. It is one of the Geometridae whose caterpillars are known as inchworms. Its name is the Elegant Carpet Moth – *Chrysolarentia phaedra*.



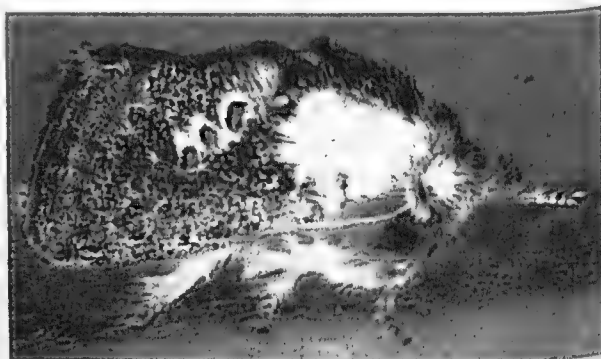
Since that first sighting, I have found it at several sites in the park and Peter Marriott has now found it at Bentleigh near Melbourne and also near Mallacoota, but the first record was from Morwell National Park.

There are always other insects besides moths on the sheet and I try and record all the

larger species. We saw two species of Scarab Beetles (Scarabaeidae), and two or more different Crane Flies (Tipulidae). I have taken particular interest in the Hemiptera. The bugs on this night consisted of two different Mirid bugs and one interesting little member of the Derbidae, known as *Saccharidote chrysonoe*. When I first met this little bug (only 1.1 cm long), I found an expert to identify it for me and he was very interested, because there were no records of this bug from Victoria, although found in both N.S.W. and Tasmania.

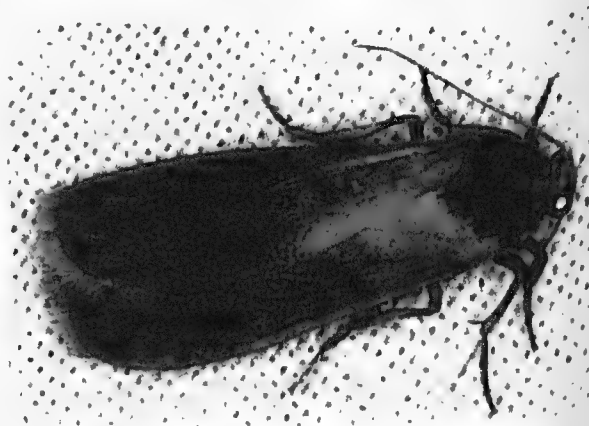


A few of the moths were quite colourful.



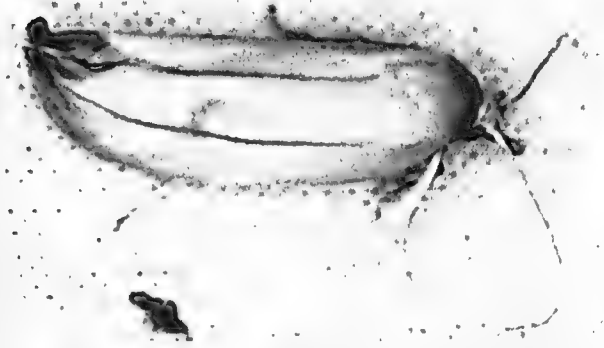
This moth is a bright orange colour. It is called the Orange Cup Moth – *Pseudanaopaea transvestita*, and is a member of the Limacodidae, the Cup Moths, whose pupal stage is in a beautifully formed cup, almost like a gum nut.

Another brightly coloured moth that we saw was the Red Footman – *Scoliacma bicolora*.



This pretty little moth is bright red, with black patches and is in the Arctiidae family.

Also very colourful is the bright orange Golden Leaf Moth – *Wingia aurata*.



This moth, one of the Oecophoridae is bright orange with thin red lines and this one was another species that I hadn't seen before and a new species for Morwell National Park.

Altogether the evening was pretty successful. I photographed 50 different moth



species and 13 other insects. At least 16 moths were species not previously seen in the park and a few others (not yet identified) will also be new species. One moth identified for me by Peter Marriott, proved to be from a family that I have not encountered before, the Xylorictidae. The moth a little but clearly

marked, black and yellow species, proved to be *Telecrates laetiorrella*.

As I have extended my survey of the moths in the Park, I have now located 287 different moth species (that have been at least partially identified) and I think there are more than 50 other species that I have photographed, but have not yet been able to give a name to.

I hope my audience found the exercise worth while despite the rain that persisted throughout. Doug and I finally packed up at 10.40 (we started packing up at 10.20, but found several more moths hiding behind the

sheet. Maybe one day I can do a demonstration in fine weather!

Thank you to those who braved the weather to see some of the moths in Morwell National Park. The rain kept a lot of people away, but it didn't discourage the moths!

Ken Harris

## REPORT ON BIRD CHALLENGE COUNT DAY 2010

Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> 2010 was a warm, sunny and humid day with a slight breeze developing. The grass growth was high following recent good rains. There was concern that, with all the water around, the birds may not be concentrated as they have been in the last few drought years.

The sites visited were the same as in 2009 with the addition of an area at Tyers North and the re-inclusion of the Traralgon South sites that are regenerating after the bush fires.

The number of species recorded 115 was pleasing (2009; 121 species) and, as anticipated, the number of birds was well down from 4978 in 2009 to 3278 in 2010.

This was due mainly to the major declines in Black Swan (41 to 3), Australasian Shelduck (218 to 28), Pink-eared Duck (1002 to 0), Grey Teal (108 to 25), Hardhead (52 to 6), Blue-billed Duck (20 to 0), Australasian Grebe (26 to 7), Hoary-headed Grebe (213 to 1). However the number of Chestnut Teal had increased from 65 to 196 with the numbers of Australian Wood Duck and Pacific Black Duck remaining constant.

Little Pied and Great Cormorant and Australian Pelican numbers were well down but not the number of Little Black Cormorants and Darter. White-faced Heron numbers were down and no Straw-necked Ibis (24 to 0) were observed. Marginally less Purple Swamphen and Dusky Moorhen but a significant decline in Eurasian Coot (118 to 19). Waders were missing except for the Black-fronted Dotterel and Masked Lapwing numbers were down (57 to 25).

Kestrels and Falcons were missing and the numbers of Whistling Kite (4 to 1) and Swamp Harrier (6 to 2) were down; Wedge-

tailed Eagle (2 to 4) and Brown Goshawk (0 to 2) were up. There were major increases in numbers of Brush Bronzewing (1 to 13) and Rainbow Lorikeet (31 to 130) and Galah increased (29 to 63) whilst Sulphur-crested Cockatoo declined (71 to 17) and there were small decreases in Eastern and Crimson Rosella. Little Corella numbers continued to decline. The number of White-throated Treecreeper doubled (16 to 32) of which 4 were well inside the township of Traralgon; similarly Satin Bowerbird numbers doubled (6 to 12).

Brown Thornbill (33 to 61) and Silvereye (8 to 27) increased. Red Wattlebird numbers declined (133 to 92) but Little Wattlebird numbers increased (2 to 6).

There were increases in Yellow-tufted Honeyeater (3 to 12) and White-plumed Honeyeater (0 to 6) with Eastern Spinebill (8 to 14). Again, this year, no Bell Miner were recorded. Olive and Golden Whistler and Grey-shrike Thrush numbers were constant but Rufus Whistler (3 to 21) and Satin Flycatcher (4 to 16) increased.

Increases were recorded in Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (17 to 27), Olive-backed Oriole (6 to 15), Grey Butcherbird (4 to 16), also Australian (Clamorous) Reed-Warbler (7 to 19) and Little Grassbird (0 to 9). The latter in a recently opened river diversion area. A decline in Australian Magpie (257 to 197) and Fairy Martin (20 to 4). Small increases in numbers of Common Starling and Common Myna.

In 2010 the first record of Cattle Egret and Silver Gull on Bird Challenge Count day and the second ever record of Brush Cuckoo.

A grand total of 46 LVFNC members and friends participated. Thanks very much to the South Gippsland birders- Rohan, Nola, Terri and Jenny, the LV Birdos, the LV Botany group and the many, self-described, "non-birders" who joined in to support the others. Another enjoyable and successful Bird Challenge Count day.

54 species are not referred to here. Ask Alix if you would like more details.

Alix Williams

*Ed's note: Details of participants and locations are also available on request.*

## MEMBERS NIGHT JANUARY 2011 BY KEN HARRIS

Continued from last issue.

### David Stickney – Great Albatrosses

David's talk was about the great albatrosses – the wandering and royal albatross.

They live in the most hostile environment in the middle of the ocean and breed on some of the most inhospitable and isolated islands in the subantarctic. They seem to thrive in the wildest weather.

David asked you to imagine you are out there in the middle of the ocean, thousands of miles from land, no boat, no food, no freshwater and there's only freezing salt water below you. This is the environment where the great albatross survives and it does this because they are incredibly adapted to this environment. They have long thin wings that allow it to glide over the sea without flapping its wings and expending any energy.

The great albatrosses are the largest flying birds on the planet and David's talk compared the two.

They are the largest flying seabirds in the world. The Wandering is the heaviest at 6-11kg (the Royal is at 8-10kg). But the Royal has the longest wingspan at over 3.5M. The Andean condor is a heavier flying bird at 11-15kg but the heaviest is the great bustard weighing at over xx kg (this was not in the talk).

Both albatross are very similar and are often confused. There are several reasons for this.

1. There are several subspecies of each bird and some are quite different. The wandering has 4 or 5 subspecies depending on where they nest (and on whether the Amsterdam albatross is included as a subspecies) and the royal has 2. Several have very different plumages and sizes
2. The birds take about 10 to 15 years to fully mature and go through several plumage stages as they mature. The wandering has 7 stages and the southern royal has 5 stages

3. The birds breed on different islands in the subantarctic. The wandering breeds on most of the subantarctic islands around Antarctica whereas the royal only breeds on the islands around NZ. The northern royal breeds on Chatham Island and Taiaroa Heads on the South Island and the Southern royal on Campbell and Auckland Islands
4. No difference between the sexes but the males are usually larger, with a larger head and more massive bill.

David showed photographs showing the difference between the two species:

Both are in intermediate stages – the wandering is stage 5 and the royal stage 3. When the birds are fully mature they have white backs, heads and along the leading edge of the wing and black along the trailing edge and the primaries.

Overall appearance of the royal is much whiter and cleaner. The dark wavy lines on the wandering are called vermiculations.

Wing – progressive whitening of the upper wing. Royal whitens from the leading edge of the inner wing backwards. Wandering from a white patch in the centre of the inner wing which links with the white on the saddle to form a white wedge between the dark leading edge and trailing edge and expands forwards.

Bill – are pink with a creamy tip and covered with horny plates. The royal is longer, paler pink with a dark cutting edge to the upper mandible. The nostrils are forward directed. The wandering bill is shorter and darker pink.

Head – Royal is always clean with no vermiculations and the forehead is more sloping, less angled than the wandering.

Tail – Royal is entirely white except for stage 1 which has a black terminal band. All the stages of the wandering usually have a black tip

Jizz – Royal flies with the wing tips bent back at the carpal joints. Wandering is straight winged and “humpbacked”.

**DAYLIGHT SAVING ENDS 3 APRIL**

## **REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 21.2.2011**

### **General Meetings & Excursions**

**Friday 1 APRIL: AGM.** Geology of Sth Gippsland – Gary Wallis (in lieu of normal March meeting as many members will be at SEANA camp)

**Saturday 2 APRIL:** Bunurong Cliffs geology excursion. Meet 10am at Bunurong Environment Centre, Inverloch.

**Friday 29 April:** Natural History of Madagascar – David Mules, David Stickney & Ken Harris

**Saturday 30 April:** Toorong Falls. Meet 10am at Noojee Hotel.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 9 April – Wetland plants at Heyfield Wetlands. Meet there 10am or carpool at Mexican Restaurant, Traralgon at 9.15. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 5 April – Morwell River Wetlands. Meet by 9.30am EST at gate on Strzelecki Hwy.

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$91.84. Investment A/c \$11,625.48.

### **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

Aust Natural History Medallion – Club to donate \$50.

AGM – positions vacant: President, VP1, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer. President has indicated it may be time to seek a new president. Other office bearers have agreed to stand again.

Incorporation of Club – letter from Bruce Adams pointing out that the legal requirement of putting ‘Inc’ after our LVFNC title and our ABN has not been met in the new publication ‘To Protect and Enjoy’. The Committee agreed to be more vigilant about incorporation requirements in future and ensure that the relevant information be placed on letterhead and other LVFNC publications. Alix will review all practices required by the Public Officer for incorporated bodies. A motion to stamp all relevant information on our recent publication ‘To Protect and Enjoy’ was passed. Alix Williams/Jackie Tims



LVFNC Web page – has been updated. Look to improve it this year. Discussion held over to next month.

Karoonda Park accommodation payment – Wendy forgot to deduct \$100 deposit from the amount we paid, has emailed camp requesting refund.

## Conservation Matters

Alpine Grazing – Jackie sent almost identical letters to the Premier of Victoria and the Minister for Environment in the Federal Government on the issue. A copy is available with articles from 'The Age' on the matter.

Smartwood audit of HVP – Suzie Zent has informed Phil and Jackie that the Smartwood Auditors will be present in Churchill on the afternoon of 16 March.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR MARCH

Gary Wallis has a Master of Science degree in Geology from the University of Melbourne, on the granites of Wilson's Promontory. He has been a secondary science teacher, employed by the West Gippsland Catchment Authority to produce the Native Vegetation Plan for West Gippsland, grown trees professionally for bulk planting by South Gippsland Landcare Groups, and is a dairy farmer. He has a long-term commitment to groups involved in environmental activities and is interested in the geology of South Gippsland. Gary has also been assisting Leon Costermans with his new book on the Geology of Victoria.

## GUEST SPEAKERS FOR APRIL

We have three speakers for April – Club members David Mules, David Stickney and Ken Harris who are going to talk about their recent trip to Madagascar.

## UNCLAIMED BOWLS

I still have two small pale green china bowls left behind from Bon and Ollie's birthday party. Please phone Gill on 5174 1730.

## SUMMER WILDFLOWER WALK

Around fifty folk gathered at Parkers Corner Parks Vic office on Saturday 15 January for the traditional Friends of Baw Baw wildflower walk. Fine sunny weather greeted us following several days of

flooding rains across much of eastern Australia. Andy Gillham from Parks Vic and Eileen Laidlaw, FOBB President, introduced our leaders for the day, botanist John Davies (over from Tasmania), ecologist and Baw Baw Frog expert Dr Greg Hollis, and local geologist Scott Murray.

Leaving our vehicles at the Mt Erica car park, we spent the morning meandering up to Mushroom Rocks. Along the way, John identified many of the plants, making comparisons with the flora of similar EVCs in Tasmania. Greg explained that the great decline in Baw Baw Frog numbers, particularly in the sub-alpine altitudes of the park, is due in large part to a virus carried by the Common Froglet to which the Baw Baw Frog is highly susceptible. Very limited numbers of the latter appear to be surviving at slightly lower altitudes.

After lunch in the dappled shade of the Rocks, Scott gave an informal talk in which he contrasted the grano-diorite of the plateau with the granite of Wilsons Promontory. He explained how, as a result of metamorphic processes, the crystalline structure of the grano-diorite exhibits much larger crystals deep underground as compared with the visible surface material.

Next up, some participants headed towards the Mt Erica summit, whilst others joined John and Greg to explore a patch of sub-alpine wet heathland EVC below the Captain Hurley Rover Crew hut. The conditions here are both very cold and damp. The deep peat soil supports Sphagnum Moss and many plants of the prickly Candle Heath *Richea victoriana*, endemic to Victoria. The Alpine Bottlebrush *Callistemon ptyoides*, characteristic of the wet habitat, was attractive in creamy-yellow flower. Other plants seen here were Mountain Daisy-bush *Olearia algida* and Spreading Rope-rush *Empodisma minus*.

The vivid green Macleay's Swallowtail Butterfly was a beautiful sight in the many dense clusters of Trigger Plants in flower in the area.

All in all, a rewarding day in one of our local special places.

Philip Rayment



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

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Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

**Front cover artwork by Beatrice Roberts**

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APRIL 2011

Issue No. 540



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



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## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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- Excursion: Saturday 30 April      Toorongo Falls. Meet 9am at LRHS, Moe (club meeting room) for car pool, or 10am at Noojee Hotel.
- Bird Group:      Tuesday 3 May: Uralla Reserve and Trafalgar Ponds. Meet at Uralla Reserve by 9.30am. Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> survey at TRU Wetlands. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)
- Botany Group:      Saturday 7 May: Proteaceae at Ken Harris's at 10am. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246
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- Meeting: Friday 27 May      The Ecology of Bats – Greg Gordon
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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Beatrice Roberts ☎ 5127 3208. Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 1pm Coalville Rd

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE  
Contacts: Alan Chambers ☎ 5174 2706 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE  
Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 13 MAY 2011**

**Subscriptions for 2011-12 due 1 March 2011 – see inside back cover for new amounts.**

**LVFNC web page:** <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

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## GELANTIPY SUMMER CAMP

21– 24 JANUARY 2011

Gelantipy is a 40 minute drive north of Buchan, rising around 600m in altitude as the road winds up the valley. There are no shops at Gelantipy and it is a peaceful setting amongst the bush and farming properties. Karoonda Park was the base for our summer camp, and we had previously stayed there in 1999 and 1991. Generations of the Sykes family have lived in the area since Clyde Sykes moved there in 1926, and the adventure camp and accommodation is run by his son Paul and Judi Sykes and their children and partners. We were comfortably accommodated in a number of old cottages, some right beside the bush allowing good birdwatching from their verandahs. Our generous evening meals included large roast joints from animals raised on the 1350 acre property.

**Saturday morning** saw our 25 participants heading north in convoy up the Gelantipy road, then heading towards the Cobberas. Our first stop was at 1st Emu Flat on the Snowy River Road (or was it the Benambra Black Mountain Rd?). The first thing spotted was a large moth in shades of brown, well camouflaged on a small shrub. It was so well camouflaged that each new arrival would take some time to work out what the photographers were so interested in. It was later identified by Ken Harris as *Parepisparis lutosaria*, one of the Geometridae (the inch worms).

A very short uphill walk brought us to a grassy alpine plain with plenty of flowering plants. Pale Vanilla Lilies, *Arthropodium milleflorum*, were flowering profusely and purple daisies were also very common. These were later identified as *Brachyscombe obovata*, which does not have a wide distribution and 'is confined to wet, peaty ground in the eastern alps subalps' (Flora of Victoria). Scattered yellow flowers were a mixture of Golden Weather-glass *Hypoxis hygrometrica*, Yam Daisy *Microseris aff lanceolata* and Bulbine lilies *Bulbine bulbosa*. A few clumps of Fairies Aprons *Utricularia dichotoma* were spotted in a damp patch, and a moth daisy bush *Olearia erubescens* caused interest with its asymmetrical daisy flowers having only a

few white 'petals' (ray florets). Some lovely bluebell flowers kept Estelle and me busy for a while with the plant book, and we decided they weren't blue enough for the Royal Bluebell, but may have been either the Waxy or the Tall Bluebell, *Wahlenbergia ceracea* or *W. stricta*. Some greenhoods growing amongst the trees proved a bit tricky, as Ken Harris thought they looked like *Pterastylis decurva*, the Summer Greenhood, but they lacked a protruding tongue which was highlighted in the orchid book. Otherwise they looked like a good match, and later Jenny Porter found another group in which one had a distinctly protruding tongue, which thus supported Ken's identification.

Wendy Savage

**Saturday pm.** During lunch, there was a small panic for 15 minutes – lost car keys. Then Ron found his keys. In his hat, on his head. Ron's face was a picture! Also at lunch, David M spotted a Striated? Pardalote entering a small hole near the base of the trunk of a tree on the far side of the road. (Pizzey\* says that both Striated and Spotted Pardalotes nest in banks but only mentions Striated as nesting in tree trunk holes). Also among the trees on this side of the road we found two species of *Aceana* growing next to each other – *A. ovina* and *A. novae-zellandiae* (Bidgee-Widgee and Sheep's burr), Spur Velleia (*V. paradoxa*). Wendy also found Ivy-Leafed Goodenia (*G. hederacea*) and Veronica gracilis (Slender Speedwell). Behind the lunch spot was a small plain and on my personal brief wandering I found in abundance, Golden Weather-glass (*Hypoxis hygrometrica*) and the Grass Trigger-Plant (*Stylidium graminifolium*), a lone flowering *Viola betonicifolia* (Purple Violet), *Podolepis robusta* (Alpine Podolepis) and a large pile of horse dung - an indication of the number of the animals in the National Park.

At Native Dog Flat there was an almost overwhelming number of plant species. Ken Harris, only slightly incapacitated by his hip operation pontificated from a chair in the shade of a small tree while we scurried back and forth demanding identification or re-inforcement of our own opinions. My list includes Avens (*Geum urbanum*), *Geranium*

*sessiliflorum* (Alpine Cranesbill), *Bracteantha subundulatum* (after some discussion - was it *B. bracteatum*?), Sweet Hound's-Tongue (*Cynoglossum suaveolens*), *Grevillea rosemarinifolia* (which I had never seen in the wild before) and Alpine Trachymene (*T. humilis*). Perhaps of most interest to me, were the fruiting bodies on a branching lichen - *Usnea* sp., growing on the small tree which Ken Harris was sitting under. *Usnea* abounds on the trunks and branches of the trees at my home - it prefers Silver Wattles - but I have only seen it fruiting once. That was in the very wet winter of 1977. Maybe our wet summer this year had encouraged *Usnea* to fruit.

At our last spot at the start of the Cobberas Track, a forested area, we found tiny red fruit on what looked like Pale Ballart. This confused us for a while until we realised that *Exocarpus strictus* fruit turns pale as it matures. There was the usual discussion as to which large flowered *Wahlenbergia* species was present. Was there a difference in the tube length of the flowers? Did the difference in colour of the flowers signify two or more species? This was not settled to our satisfaction - I find *Wahlenbergia* a frustrating genus. Also interesting was *Chionogentias* sp., and reading from the Flora\* possibly *C. cuninghamii*. All *Chionogentias* species were once *Gentianella diamensis*.

\*1. Pizzey, G. and Doyle R. A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia. Sydney 1980.

\* 2. Flora of Australia Vol. 4. Walsh N.G. and Entwisle, T.J. Melbourne 1999.

Jackie Tims

**Sunday morning.** We left at 9.05am and drove east along the Bonang-Gelantipy Road into the Snowy River National Park to the Little River Falls. Botanising along the track Ken H. was asked about a plant by a person who stated that "my task is to find something you don't know". A hard task; and in this case he didn't. (Tall Poppy syndrome?) Ken did point out Digger's Speedwell and had us smelling native carrot roots. Cicadas were numerous and noisy and a seldom seen Square-tailed Kite was observed.

It was here that we started the search for the Yellow Hyacinth Orchid. (YHO)

Next to the Little River Gorge ("Victoria's deepest gorge - 600m") where a short walk finished at a platform providing a magnificent view way, way down, along a section of the river and across the surrounding hills. Research since confirms that they were masses of blackberries we could see growing along the river.

The high country here had an interesting range of plants, growing on very dry, gravelly ground. But no YHO.

From there the road, a narrow one-laned track with few passing places, wound around the side of the steep mountains and descended into McKillops Bridge. (To quote Parks Vic "one of Victoria's most precarious roads", "great scenery and spectacular vertical drops".) En route, the FN convoy stopped, dangerously, to observe a *Myoporum floribundum* that Ken H. had observed in that spot 25 years ago.

We passed through a colony of Bell Miners as we approached the bridge.

McKillops Bridge- a well-known name from weather forecasts. 256m long, spanning the Snowy River where the numerous water-level reading posts range up to 13.9m.



Photo: Phil Rayment

Now classified by the National Trust, the bridge, when completed in 1936, was claimed to be "the longest welded steel-truss road bridge in the world", combining concrete substructure with a timber stock-bridge superstructure.



Such a grand bridge appears to have been built in the middle of nowhere. However, from 1835, the site was an important stock crossing on the route between the high Monaro and the settlement of Port Phillip. The bridge, replacing a punt, was built to allow the easy passage of livestock across the high country.

Alix Williams

**Sunday afternoon - around McKillops Bridge.** We stopped for lunch at a picnic spot just east of McKillops Bridge near the Deddick River. Conditions were hot in the river valley and it was good to have shade provided by the local trees which included Red Box and Kurrajongs, as well as Black and White Cypress-pines.

Also appreciating the tree cover were a variety of small birds, including Scarlet Robins, Yellow-rumped and Buff-rumped Thornbills and a Brown Tree-creeper. A Speckled Warbler was seen close to the bridge.

The Deddick River was very muddy because of an overnight downpour further upstream. It may have been pretty low otherwise.

After lunch we strolled along the Snowy River Nature Trail, starting near McKillops Bridge and heading south. There were more flowers out near the bridge where conditions were possibly moister. Near the start we saw *Podolepis hieracioides*, about 0.5 m high, with golden flowers that have rather untidy, toothed, petals. Also the Snowy River Wattle, *Acacia boormanii*, was fairly common, forming thickets, all from the same roots.

One plant in flower along the walk was the Shrubby Platysace, *P. lanceolata*, which has umbels of white flowers. And there were a couple of Daisy-bushes. One was the Pepper Everlasting, *Ozothamnus conditus*, which has longish narrow leaves, dark green above and white underneath, and white flower racemes. The other was the Grey Everlasting, *Ozothamnus obcordatus*, whose leaves were broad near the tip and relatively short, whilst the flower racemes were rather musty-coloured, possibly a bit dried off.

Further on, the slopes above the river were pretty dry and probably the most prevalent

low-level plant was the very hardy Rock Fern, *Cheilanthes tenuifolia*. Another plant which coped with the conditions was the Prickly Broom Heath, *Monotoca scoparia*, which has narrow spiky leaves with parallel lines underneath when observed closely.



Yellow Hyacinth Orchid Photo: Phil Rayment

On the road back we stopped at Little River Track, to look for the elusive Yellow Hyacinth Orchid, *Dipodium hamiltonianum*. And we at last found a couple on sloping ground about 50 metres from the carpark. The flowers were greenish yellow, with red spots. Another plant found there was the Rough Burr-daisy, *Calotis lappulacea*, which has small yellow burr-like flowers on long stalks. We also spent some time watching Wee-bills flitting among the branches.

From there we returned along the side of the deep river valley with the blue-leaved Red Box providing much of the colour on the slopes, with quite a lot of Mistletoe attached to it.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

On the way back a Spotted Quail Thrush landed dangerously on the road ahead, before taking off again. And a juvenile Goshawk was seen also.

Ron Carey

**Monday morning.** After farewelling our comfortable accommodation a bit after 9am we headed off along Tulloch Ard Road. This took us through farmland grazed by fat Herefords and into the Snowy River National Park and how beautiful it was. Our first stop was at the newly opened Tulloch Ard Lookout track, a 1.6k walk through Damp Forest, Scrubby Dry and Heathy Dry Forest types. At the end of the track we were rewarded with grand views of the gorge, river and the seemingly never ending valleys and ridges.



*Snowy River Gorge from Tulloch Ard Lookout*

Along the track we passed under magnificent Mountain Grey Gums, *E. cypellocarpa*, Narrow Leave Peppermints, *E. Radiata*, while on the valley spurs and drier areas were White Stringybark, *E. globoidea* and Silver Top Ash, *E. sieberi*. Beside the track remembering and identifying the plants was a challenge to some of us. With the help of Ken Harris's list of 69 species, the species I noticed were the leafy stems of the lily *Stypandra glauca* and large shrubs, *Persoonia confertiflora* (Cluster-flowered Geebung), *Hovea pannosa* (2 m tall) and *Hakea eriantha*.



*Hovea pannosa*

This country was thought to be impenetrable until 1937 when Arthur Hunt and Stanley Hanson took a wooden canoe on a 2 month journey from Jindabyne to Marlo. There was logging in the 1970s.



*Persoonia confertiflora* (Cluster-flowered Geebung)

The walking track, although new, was poorly graded in some steeper sections with no water bars, steps or contours. One wonders how eroded it will become after some heavy rains. This also seemed to be a reflection of several Parks tracks some of us have been on recently where maintenance does not appear to have been carried out for some time.

On the opposite side of the car park was a short walk to a 200 year old *E. cypellocarpa* with a circumference of more than 8 metres. Sitting quietly, one was enthralled by the ambience of quintessential East Gippsland, tall trees shrouded in drifting mists, an understorey of bright green tree ferns, occasional calls of pied currawongs, whipbirds and others ringing through the forest.

The remaining ventures of the day were cut short when the road ahead was blocked by a large fallen tree. So back to the main road and direct to Buchan Caves for lunch. We could have been transported to another country, this reserve having been developed in the 1930s with non native trees. They

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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were beautiful too and would provide much shade when needed [not today].

Many thanks to the organizers and fellow field nats for an enjoyable time in an isolated part of Victoria.

Julie Parker    Photos by Jenny Porter

## **REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 21.3.2011**

### **General Meetings & Excursions**

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**Saturday 30 April:** Toorongo Falls. Meet 9am for car pool at LRHS, Moe, or 10am at Noojee Hotel.

**Friday 27 May:** The Ecology of Bats – Greg Gordon

**Saturday 28 May:** Duff Sawmill Heritage Trail for fungi. Meet 10am Traralgon South Hall, or car pool 9.30 at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant car park.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 7 May – Proteaceae, 10am at Ken Harris's, 26 Haverbrack Ave, Churchill. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 3 May – Uralla Reserve and Trafalgar Ponds. Meet by 9.30am at Uralla. Thursday 19 May TRU Wetlands survey – contact Alix well before then if intending to go. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$2492.90. Investment A/c \$11,735.42.

### **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

AGM – positions vacant: President, VP1, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer. Incumbents have renominated.

Incorporation requirements – Alix has checked material she received from previous Public Officer, and is collecting missing items. She has detailed the role of the Public Officer for future reference. Ken Harris attended a Latrobe City meeting re this role and has provided Alix with relevant material.

Karoonda Park, Gelantipy, accommodation overpayment has been refunded.

LVFNC Web page – 'About LVFNC' section on web page is no longer working. Secretary will try to get some help to fix it. Will ask if a club member is willing to work on improving website to add more material and links.

Bon Thompson's books and reports – Bon has some material for disposal and has compiled a list to see if the club or any members want them. Will keep *Muelleria* and Beaglehole's plant list books in club archive. Yet to look at list in more detail.

Eric Lubcke Reserve – Kevin Jones asked club about boundaries of reserve as some tree clearing of Yarra gums has taken place. It is possibly on adjoining land. DSE and Latrobe City have become involved. Will monitor progress.

General Meeting sound system – need more people who can set up sound system. Phil and Ken Smith can. Need to train more for back up.

"Growth stages and tolerable fire intervals for Victoria's native vegetation data sets" by David Cheal (ARI) donated to club.

Publicity – Alix has updated contact list and publicity process for TV, radio and newspapers. Has also made another attempt to get Warragul Gazette to carry our publicity, but they are only willing to publicise events in Baw Baw Shire.

Gelantipy bird list updated for sightings for the 3 camps (1991, 1999, 2011) by Alix.

### **Conservation Matters**

Alpine Grazing – no response to club. Tony Burke has told Vic Govt to remove the cattle by April. Will monitor progress.

Smartwood audit of HVP 16 March – John Poppins, Jackie Tims and Anne Westwood attended. Investigators of Smartwood were also there due to criticism of accreditation being given in the past. Revegetation of log landing poorly done and logging too close to College Creek.

Grand Strzelecki Track report by Ken Harris – track pushed in a couple of kilometres beyond existing Billys Creek Track. Third Sunday in April (17<sup>th</sup>) Friends of Morwell NP members will walk its length.

## REMINDER

Subscriptions for 2011-12 are now due – please see inside back cover for full details.

### GUEST SPEAKER FOR MAY

**Greg Gordon** has been rescuing and rehabilitating native animals for years. Greg is an animal technician lecturer at Victoria University's Werribee Campus and also volunteers as regional coordinator of Wildlife Victoria, an organization that provides 24-hour wildlife rescue and information. Bats are one of the wildlife species that Greg has learned a lot about through this work.

### MCLOUGHLINS BEACH EXCURSION

Eleven members and one welcome visitor, Mike West from England, assembled at Yarram on Saturday 26 February on a fine and warm late summer day. We travelled in convoy to McLoughlins Beach to explore a part of the Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park, at the south-western end of the Ninety Mile Beach.

Local resident Lesley Joyce approached us in the car park, explaining her concern with current proposals to deepen the channel through the estuary to the sea. Such a move would most likely increase both the number and speeds of motor boats using this popular fishing spot, impacting an important habitat of migratory waders. We agreed to write a letter in support of protecting this site if some background information was provided to the club.

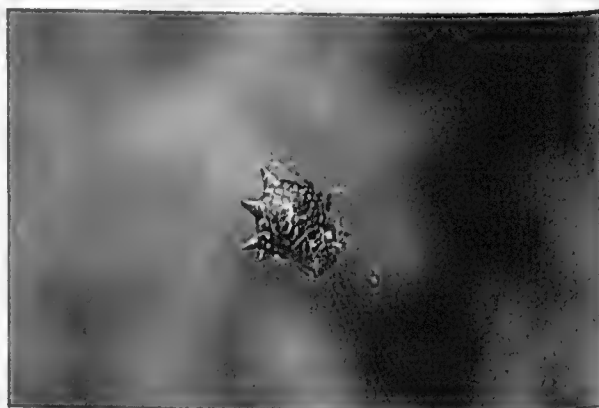
We spent the morning strolling across the estuary via the ageing footbridge and heading to the Ninety Mile Beach through the poa grassland and coastal woodland. White Mangroves were growing on the mudflats fringing the estuary near the car park, and Pacific Gulls and Australian White Ibis were seen here. On the footbridge, we spoke with a guy from Birds Australia who is monitoring migratory birds as part of the Shorebirds 2020 program.

We sighted a very dusty Pobblebonk Frog at the edge of the track as it entered the coastal woodland. The plants here included Coast Banksia, *B. integrifolia*, Coast Beard-heath, *Leucopogon parviflorus*, Prickly Broom-

heath, *Monotoca scoparia* and Small-leaved Clematis, *C. microphylla*, found only along coastal regions.

From the observation platform above the beach, we watched flocks of feeding Muttonbirds over the water, below the horizon.

Following a leisurely lunch back at the cars, we ventured westwards along the boardwalk at the estuary edge as far as the pier near the settled area. We watched five Royal Spoonbills flying over the estuary and landing near a flock of ibis. An interesting sight in the saltmarsh were numerous webs of the "crab-like" Spiny Spider, *Gasteracantha* sp. (Apparently a spider of this genus was collected by Joseph Banks in 1770 near what is now Cooktown.) Their large webs spanned gaps of around 900 mm between low shrubs. The spiders themselves have spined bodies green, yellow-orange and black in colour.



*Spiny Spider - Gasteracantha sp.*

Whilst on the subject of terrestrial invertebrates, a number of female Common Brown butterflies were seen along the boardwalk.

The pier end proved to be a good bird observation point at the early afternoon low tide. Sightings included Black Swans, a good number of White-faced Herons stepping elegantly across the mudflats, Eastern Curlews and Caspian and Crested Terns, the latter flying past us.

Although this pleasant excursion was not formally led, we benefited in particular from Rohan Bugg's knowledge of the birds of the area and Ken Harris' wide-ranging expertise.

Philip Rayment

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

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Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
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The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
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TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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MAY 2011

Issue No. 541



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Duff Sawmill Heritage Trail for fungi. Meet 10am at the Traralgon South Hall, or car pool 9.30 at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant

Bird Group:

Tuesday 7 June: Moe Treatment Works by 9.30am. Please contact Alix well in advance if planning to go: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 4 June: Fungi from Duff Sawmill Trail, 10am at Jackie Tims', Yarragon South. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 24 June

Botanical Illustration – Laurie Andrews

Excursion: Saturday 25 June

Gunyah Gunyah Rainforest Reserve. Meet 10am at Boolarra Rail Trail Reserve carpark.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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### FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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### FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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### SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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### FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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### HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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### DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 10 JUNE 2011

Subscriptions for 2011-12 are now overdue – see inside back cover for details.

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

## PRESIDENTS REPORT 2010-2011

2010 was a very significant year for our Club, being our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is a challenge to maintain a Club like ours in an era of rapid change and enormous technological advances. Looking back I think we can be proud of our achievement over the last 50 years. I was very impressed with the results of the three projects we undertook to celebrate our anniversary year – the photographic competition, production of the Club History book “To Protect and Enjoy, The first fifty years of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists Club 1960-2010”, and hosting the SEANA Spring Camp on a weekend in October.

The very successful photographic competition culminated in an exhibition and judging in September. I would like to congratulate all the winners and participants, and thank the competition sub-committee – particularly the two Kens (Harris and Smith) for their contribution towards the event's success.

Phil and Wendy put a huge effort into researching, writing and editing the Club History, with much input from the other members of the sub-committee, and provision of historical material by Bon and Ollie Thompson and Lorna Long.

At the October meeting Life Memberships were awarded to Phil and Wendy for their contributions over the last 20 or so years.

During our hectic year we enjoyed a diverse selection of topics including the talk by Greg Gordon on Wildlife Parasites in August, and the presentation in February by Neville Daly and Bill Lay on the History of the Baw Baw Plateau. We also provided some talks from different locations outside our region, such as the presentation on the Birds and Mammals of the Antarctic in March by myself, and the Simpson Desert Camel Walk by Graham Duell in July. Both these regions are very remote but now more easily accessible with a highly evolved tourism industry.

Some talks by experts in specialized areas of natural history included fungi by Geoff Lay in April, Frogs by Ivor Graney in May, Koalas on Snake Island by Ross Williamson in October, and Impact of Habitat on Insect

Communities by Peter O'Donnell in November. All these talks were highly interesting because they were presented by speakers who had a great depth of knowledge in their chosen topics.

A more generalized environmental topic was addressed by Peter Homan who took up the challenging issue of Fauna in Fragments and Revegetation Areas. Thanks to Ken Harris for filling in at the September meeting at very short notice to give us a presentation of the best 96 photographs in the photo competition.

Some excursions were related to the topic of the previous night's general meeting. We followed up Greg Gordon's talk on parasites by viewing many of them under a microscope. Others included a fungi excursion to Tarra Bulga National Park with Geoff Lay, and a frog excursion to Morwell River Wetlands with Ivor Graney.

We were able to explore some less often visited areas – Avon Mt Hedrick Wilderness, The Lakes National Park, Won Wron Forest, and Digger Island near Walkerville, accessed via private property. More regularly visited sites were Morwell National Park, TRU Wetlands, Ollerton Avenue Reserve and Edward Hunter Heritage Bush Reserve.

I am pleased that our attendance figures have been maintained throughout the year with averages of just under 29 attending our general meetings, and over 19 coming on excursions. The most popular talk was Ivor Graney on Frogs with an audience of 50 people.

Our summer camp at Gelantipy was well attended by Club members, and I would like to thank Phil for leading the excursions and Wendy for organizing the accommodation and preparing the itinerary.

It is now timely to turn our attention to the next 50 years. We need to ask ourselves what we want to achieve in the future, what our goals and strategies are going to be, where our new members are going to come from. I don't have the answers to these difficult questions, all I can do is pose the questions and it will be up to all of us help find the answers.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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Our Club has many community services to offer and I believe it is too important to fail. We have an ageing membership and one of my priorities will be to attract younger members. One possible approach might draw on the fact that we have a number of active Friends Groups in our region and I feel there is scope for us to involve more members of these groups in our Club. I would be very interested in hearing your views and ideas on this issue. I would also like to see more members involved in the business operation of our Club. Our business meetings provide a forum of lively discussions on many of our local issues and we can only provide a summary in our general meetings. I encourage you all to come along to these meetings and get more involved.

I was saddened to hear of the passing of Jim Blucher last year but pleased that many of us were able to attend his funeral. I have known Jim for as long as I have been a member of the Club and I know he made an active and valuable contribution over many years. Although Jim was not able to attend our meetings in the last few years he still maintained an active interest in the Club.

Finally I would like to thank you all for my endorsement as your president for a further two years. We are very fortunate in having a stable and dedicated committee and I would also like to thank those members who accepted their nominations for a further two years. It is very encouraging that all our committee members show such a willingness to contribute and it is a privilege for me to serve as your president. I look forward to the next two years and seeing some new faces at our business meetings.

David Stickney

*Editor's note: This is an abridged version of David's report. The full version is available from me on request.*

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 18.4.2011

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 27 May:** The Ecology of Bats – Greg Gordon

**Saturday 28 May:** Duff Sawmill Heritage Trail for fungi. Meet 10am Traralgon South

Hall, or carpool 9.30 at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant.

**Friday 24 June:** Botanical Illustration – Laurie Andrews

**Saturday 25 June:** Gunyah Gunyah Rainforest Reserve. Meet 10am at Boolarra Rail Trail Reserve carpark.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 4 June – Fungi (from Duff Sawmill Heritage Trail excursion) 10am at Jackie Tims', Yarragon Sth. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 7 June – Moe treatment Works by 9.30am. Please contact Alix well before if going. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1371.60. Investment A/c \$13,235.42. LVFNC Inc SEANA Inc camp account has now been closed.

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

LVFNC Web page has now been fixed.

Bon Thompson's books and reports – list is being looked at in more detail.

President away May meeting. Secretary away June meeting.

New local newspaper 'LV Voice' has requested information on our activities. Alix has added them to our publicity list.

Check on stock of 'The Nature of Latrobe' books at our outlets.

DSE wish to add flora and fauna lists from Field Naturalist Clubs to their data base, particularly location of species of regional significance or higher. Karl Just will contact Ken Harris and Alix Williams.

Treasurer will update Membership list for committee.

Walkie Talkie sets – David S suggests we should have these for communicating when travelling in convoy. He will investigate.

Tape recorder – we need a new one.

### Conservation Matters

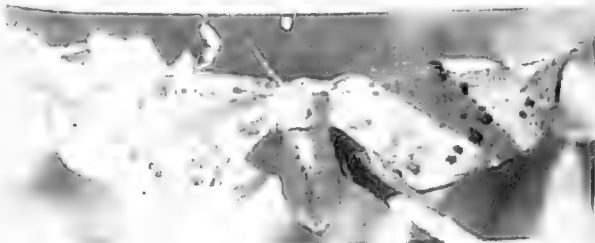
Cattle in Alpine NP – response from Tony Burke, Federal Minister for Environment etc. outlining his actions to remove the cattle, and his intention to use due process to prevent them being returned.

## GELANTIPY SUMMER CAMP – MOTH TRAPPING

At the Summer camp in Gelantipy, I took along my mercury vapour light, sheet and generator in the hope of getting the chance to do some moth trapping in a different area from the Latrobe Valley.

The night we arrived, we were rather late, and it was far too wet, so the moths were left in peace.

During the first days outing a large



spectacular moth was spotted roosting on a low shrub. It proved to be *Parepisparis lutosaria* in the inchworm family, the Geometridae.

There were occasional heavy showers during that day, but it seemed to clear towards the evening, so I decided to go ahead with a first attempt to attract some moths. With the threat of rain I wanted to work close to cover so I set up between two apple trees just below the cabin I was staying in. This meant that I could use the mains for power and had no need to fire up the generator.

I started immediately after tea, which was just on sunset a little after 08.30 pm. It started slowly, with a lot of little flies, and the first moth arrived at 08:56, being a little Tortricid in the genus *Capua*. It was not a hugely successful evening, but we did attract 24 different moth species and I also photographed a couple of other insects. I had intended to continue until 10:30, but at 10.00 I felt a couple of drops of rain and started a hurried close-down, just before a very heavy rain squall came through.

The moths that came to the light were varied. The smallest was the tiny *Tebenna micalis* (Choreutidae) only 0.6 cm long. The Triangular Moth – *Epidesmia chilonaria* (Geometridae) is spectacular in flight with its bright orange hind wings. When it lands it is very cryptic. The hind wings are

concealed and if it lands on dry leaves it merges in as just another dead leaf.



The largest that we saw was the orange rain moth *Abantiades hyalinatus* (Hepialidae). This photograph was taken as it rested on my boot!

The Coprosma Hawk-moth – *Hippotion scrofa* (Sphingidae) is an attractive moth that also disappears when it lands and hides its bright red hind wings, whereas the Cossid moth *Endoxyla secta* is mainly grey and is always well camouflaged against lichens.

We encountered one Plume Moth –



*Platyptilia emissalis* (Pterophidae). The plume moths hardly look like moths at all having very slender wings that are subdivided into feather-like segments.

One colourful moth came just before the rain, one of the Magpie Moths – *Spilosoma curvata*, creamy-yellow and black with a scarlet body.

There are always other visitors to the sheet besides the moths, most of them various small flies. We did see one Christmas Beetle – *Anoplognathus chloropyrus* (Scarabaeidae), but the most interesting visitor was a Mantis Lacewing – *Ditaxis merediei* (Mantispidae). This is a fascinating example of parallel evolution. The mantis lacewings are in the lacewing order, the



Neuroptera, but they look almost exactly like miniature praying mantises. Our mantis lacewing enjoyed its visit to the sheet. He used his forelegs to catch tiny little flies and ate them on the spot. In only about 3 minutes watching, I saw it capture and eat at least twelve flies.

Perhaps the most interesting moth we found was not attracted to the sheet, but as we



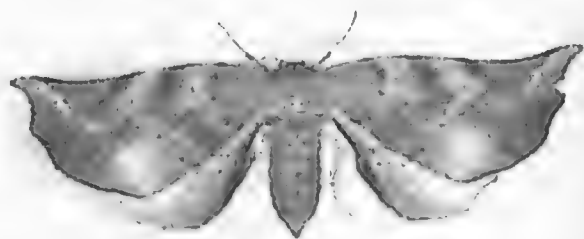
completed our rapid withdrawal when the

rain started, I spotted it under a light on the back of the cabin. It proved to be *Hectobrocha pentacyma* (Arctiidae). The interest arose when I looked up Moths of Victoria Part 2 by Peter Marriott. This moth is known in Victoria from only 3 specimens, the most recent in 1977. Our find extends its range and provides the first photos of a live moth taken in Victoria. We found another of the same species on the following night!

One other little moth on the sheet was *Nola melanogramma* (Nolidae) which also proved special when looked up in Moths of Victoria. Its known distribution was confined to the Melbourne area and our sighting extends its distribution some 400 kms further East.

On Sunday the weather was much better and I set up the light, powered by the generator, in the bush area some 300 metres beyond the cabins. We had more success on this second night, with 52 different moths coming to the light only 8 of which we had seen the previous night. There was also a greater variety of other insects and I photographed 8 others as well as all the moths. We kept going until 10.30 this time, with no threat of rain.

The best of the moths was perhaps *Parepisparis virgatus* (Geometridae) a close cousin of the one we found in daylight on



our first day's excursion.

Other moths of note included another large rain moth, *Abantiades labyrinthicus* (Hepialidae), which took a liking to Estelle and stayed on her trouser leg for a long time. We also saw the Pond Moth – *Hygraula nitens*, one of the very few moths whose caterpillars live under water feeding on pond plants.



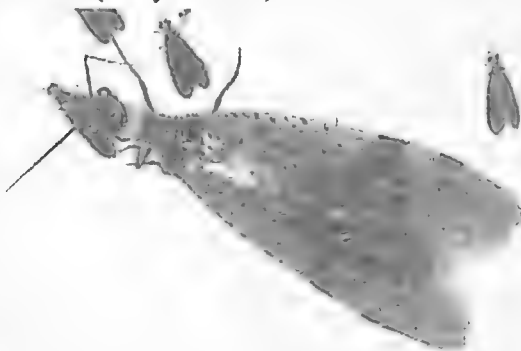
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As on the previous night a Mantis Lacewing found the light and tucked in to the little flies on the sheet, but it was a different slightly smaller species, *Campion australasiae*. It wasn't the only insect to take advantage of the ready source of food. We found an earwig on the sheet. You don't tend



to think of earwigs flying, because its wings are well concealed, folded up under its short hardened forewings, like the rove beetles. This one had a small caddisfly clasped in its pincers as in this picture. Later on we saw that it had transferred its prey to the head end and was tucking in to its supper. The earwig proved to be a native earwig species, the Common Brown Earwig – *Labidura truncata* (Labiduridae).

Another interesting visitor to the sheet was a large Dobsonfly – *Archichauliodes guttiferus* (Corydalidae). The Dobsonflies



and Alderflies are in an order of their own, the Megaloptera.

Notice, in the Dobsonfly picture there are several small moth-like insects. These were all over the sheet in enormous numbers. I made a rough estimate of at least 300 of

them. They had me really puzzled, until I referred them to the Melbourne Museum who told me that they were all caddisflies. Most caddisflies that I have seen are much larger and appear in ones and twos, not in huge swarms.



Another insect that interested me was this large lacewing. It is a species I have not seen before and proved to be the Blue Eyes Lacewing – *Nymphes myrmeleonides* (Nymphidae).

Despite the late hour, both evenings were well attended

by other Field Nats. I hope they found the array of insects that we saw of interest.

Ken Harris

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR JUNE

Laurie Andrews was a secondary Maths teacher and took up painting upon retirement. She had studied botany in her science degree, but her interest was renewed after she and her husband bought a property at English's Corner in the Strzeleckis and they found they had a wonderful fern gully on it. Laurie started painting the ferns and furthered her studies in botany. She conducts classes in Botanical Illustration at Yinnar. each year.

## SEANA AUTUMN CAMP AT ANGLESEA

The Anglesea and Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna (ANGAIR) hosted the Autumn 2011 SEANA camp over the extended weekend of 25-28 March. The YMCA Recreation Camp in Anglesea, sited on the north-east edge of the town in extensive bushland, proved to be an excellent base. A good number of LVFNC participants were impressed by ANGAIR members' knowledge of local natural history and commitment to

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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conservation which provided the basis for a really good program of excursions and evening talks enjoyed by over one hundred naturalists from eighteen SEANA clubs.

ANGAIR President Chris Morrissey provided the Friday evening welcome and surveyed her club's first forty years from its formation in 1969. One of its first initiatives was a formal request to the then Premier of Victoria, Mr (later Sir Henry) Bolte, for creation of a national park between Anglesea and Aireys Inlet. Today, of course, that floristically rich area forms part of the Great Otway National Park. Chris introduced local naturalist Margaret MacDonald, who gave a superb photographic presentation on local flora and fauna. Margaret edited the recent ANGAIR 2009 publication, *Flowers of Anglesea and Aireys Inlet*.

Two talks were given on Saturday evening. First, Mark Rodrigue, Parks Victoria Marine Parks program leader, overviewed the current approach to management of Victoria's extensive rich and varied marine habitats, then took us on a well-illustrated "tour" of the marine life of the state's west coast. Then Meg Cullen spoke about protection of beach-nesting birds, using the Hooded Plover as a case study. Threats to these shore birds include foxes, high tides and human recreation activities such as horseriding and dune/ beach vehicle use.

Sunday evening speakers were Craig Morley, on the ecology of the critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrot, and David Pace, covering the frogs of the Surf Coast region.

Fifteen full or half day excursions were offered across Saturday and Sunday, extending across the region between Breamlea to the north-east and Aireys Inlet to the west of home base; many were run more than once, making for very comfortable group sizes.

On Saturday morning, geologist Robert King led an excursion which explained the geological features of the Aireys Inlet coast which include the red brown clays of the Angahook Formation near Sunnymeade beach and fossiliferous limestone cliffs a rock stack and an irregular shore platform. Directly below the lighthouse is the

truncated base of a volcano, where black basalt underlies the limestone.



*Eagle Rock near Aireys Inlet – limestone over basalt. Photo: Phil Rayment*

In the afternoon, your scribe joined ANGAIR members Ros and Tim Gibson at the mouth of Painkalac Creek for a cliff walk near Aireys Inlet. Ros and Tim lived there for about ten years until recently, and helped with regular surveys of the state of the creek's estuary – usually closed off from the sea by a sandbar which is occasionally breached to release floodwaters. The foreshore vegetation was severely burnt in the 1983 fires, but on-going efforts by ANGAIR members have assisted the re-establishment of the indigenous species such as Moonah, Coast Beard-heath, White Correa, Thyme Rice-flower and Dea Box. At one point, we enjoyed watching a Singing Honeyeater perched on a dead branch and hearing its melodious trill call. We heard (and some spotted) the threatened Rufous Bristlebird which frequents this area.

Philip Rayment

*To be continued next issue.*

## REMINDER

**Subscriptions for 2011-12 are now overdue and will be cancelled if not paid.**

**Please see inside back cover for payment details.**

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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JUNE 2011

Issue No. 542



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 24 June

Excursion: Saturday 25 June

Bird Group:

Botany Group:

Botanical Illustration – Laurie Andrews

Gunyah Gunyah Rainforest Reserve. Meet 10am at Boolarra Rail Trail Reserve carpark.

Tuesday 5 July: Traralgon Reserves. Meet by 9.30am at TRRCR carpark, Hickox Street. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

Saturday 2 July: Mosses at Tarra Bulga NP. Meet 9.15 at T'gon Mexican Rest for carpool, or 10am at Tarra Bulga Visitor Centre. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 22 July

Excursion: Saturday 23 July

Winter Members' Night – open theme

Melbourne Zoo by train. Arrive Flinders St 11.21am, leave 4.30pm.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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## INVERLOCH EXCURSION 2.4.2011

### Morning – Screw Creek

The walk started in the bushland near where the Screw Creek estuary, to the east of Inverloch, drains into Anderson's Inlet. The coastal environment provided many plants not often seen on our excursions. Strolling upstream, the group to which I attached drew attention to many plants. The highlight for many was the flowering Jug Greenhood (*Pterostylus alveata*), but there were also White Correa (*Correa alba*), Coast Swainson Pea (*Swainsona lessertifolia*), Native Raspberry (*Rubus parvifolius*), the edible Bower Spinach (*Tetragonia implexicoma*), Cinquefoil Crane's-bill (*Geranium potentilloides*), Austral Stork's-bill (*Pelagonium australe*), Coast Sword Sedge (*Lepidosperma gladiatum*) and Seaberry Saltbush (*Rhagodia candolleana*).

Surprisingly few birds were seen, but where the overarching canopy gave way to an open section where Screw Creek becomes an estuary there was a New Holland Honeyeater, Ibis and White-faced Heron. Plants in this open section included Marsh Saltbush (*Atriplex paludosa*), White Elderberry (*Sambucus gaudichaudiana*), Coast Beard-heath (*Leucopogon parviflorus*), Blady Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), and Beaded Glasswort (*Sarcocornia quinqueflora*).

After crossing the bridge across the creek mouth most people took the track upstream alongside the creek as far as a landing which provided views across the creek. Obvious species were Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*), Creeping Woodsorrel (*Oxalis exilis*), and the White Mangrove (*Avicennia marina*).

### Afternoon – Bunurong coastal cliffs and marine platforms

The afternoon excursion was led by Gary Wallis, the speaker from the previous evening's South Gippsland geology talk. The excursion accessed the beach from *The Caves* carpark 6 km. south-west of Inverloch on the scenic coast road to Cape Paterson, and within the Bunurong Marine Park.

From the top of the cliff in the carpark could be seen the entrance of Anderson's Inlet into

Bass Strait with the sand spit of Point Smythe bordering the further side of the entrance. Beyond that the broad sweep of Venus Bay arcs around to the east, terminating in Cape Liptrap. Below this vantage point lay the coastal cliffs and marine platforms of 120 million year old Cretaceous freshwater sandstone, mudstone and conglomerate sediments, although the tide covered much of the marine platform.

To commence Gary commented on coastal erosion giving rise to marine platforms and the succession whereby a cave can give way to a tunnel which can form a bridge which can collapse to produce a rock stack. Past coastal erosion needs to be viewed in terms of the sea level height at various past times and that there have recently been ice ages about every 100,000 years. For example, sea level 6,000 years ago was about 1 metre higher. Past marine platforms have formed numerous terraces. Coastal erosion is about 1 - 3 cm. per year – each season Dinosaur Dreaming dig staff walk the cliff face and platform looking for freshly exposed fossils.

Sandstone has formed by the compression of sand under the load of overlying sediments. This has squeezed out water and compressed the sand, a little lime infiltration acting as cement. Similarly mudstone and conglomerate have formed. Conglomerate is pebbles embedded in a fine grained substrate, so it's within conglomerate, where heavier particles sunk to the bottom in a Cretaceous stream that dinosaur bone fragments are most likely to have also settled.

Sediments in the cliff face appear to be gently dipping to the north-east and are traversed by numerous nearly vertical faults. At one prominent fault plane the bending of sedimentary layers downward indicated that the north-easterly section had moved upwards relative to the south-westerly section's downward movement, and showed a section of greatly shattered rocks. Similar fault planes along the cliff face indicate this is an area where step faulting has occurred. In one location rock boulders containing small crystals drew attention to an igneous intrusion of a dyke of dolerite in the base of the cliff face.

There is much evidence of fossilized wood, mostly conifers: some resembles black coal formed as a result of heat and pressure, while other wood fragments have been infilled with calcite to give a yellowish appearance. On the marine platform once the tide had retreated a little, could be seen a couple of large fossilized tree stumps, presumably of conifers. Most of the cliff and marine platform exhibit faulting and joint planes (a crack in which there has been no movement). Some of these have acted as sites for calcite to crystallize, while others have allowed iron rich minerals to permeate a little way into the adjoining sediments.

Signage alongside the track from the carpark had already provided information on Museum Victoria and Monash University's joint dinosaur dig site, which has yielded thousands of bone fragments. While to recognize bone and identify them is a highly skilled task, many of them have been identified as being fragments of two legged carnivorous dinosaurs of the theropod group. A number of likely bone pieces did appear as being slightly more brown than the host rock, and at one location was a possible three-toed footprint.

Graeme Rowe.

## SEANA AUTUMN CAMP AT ANGLESEA

*Continued from last issue.*

Sunday morning took us to the Anglesea Heath, to the north-west of the town, to explore its orchids and other plant species, ably led by Margaret MacDonald. At our first stop in cleared roadside verge, Margaret pointed out two Midge-orchids, the common Bearded *Corunastylis morrisii* and the rarer Fringed *C. ciliata*. The rosettes of the Tiny Sundew *Drosera pygmaea* were seen in profusion. We enjoyed watching a flock of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos here. Further on, we added Parson's Bands *Eriochilus cucullatus* to our orchid list, observing also Cranberry Heath *Astroloma humifusum*, with its tubular deep red flowers. The third stop was in a forested area of the heath, with Black Wattle *Acacia mearnsii*; we found lots of Autumn Bird-orchids *Chiloglottis reflexa* and a solitary Tall Bird-orchid *C. trilabra* in flower. The final stop was in an

area with ironstone clay soil, supporting Shining Peppermint *Eucalyptus falciformis*, recognised as a species in 2008. Margaret pointed out Prickly Broom-heath *Monotoca scoparia* – its male and female flowers were seen growing on separate plants. We found more Bearded Midge-orchids at this elevated site, which afforded good views over the Anglesea Heath. This area was leased to Alcoa of Australia Ltd in the 1960s for brown coal extraction. Now, Alcoa, Parks Victoria and the community are cooperating to protect its natural values.

Sunday afternoon was rather more energetic for those joining ANGAIIR member Philippa Hesterman's Ixodia Track walk from camp, north-east of Anglesea. A 5 km circuit walk took us along the Ixodia, Black Wattle and Tree Creeper Tracks to a lookout at Scrubby Hill for good views to the coal mine, power station (sounds like home!), Anglesea Heath and the coast. As the track name suggests, we saw masses of Ixodia *I. achillaeoides* subsp *alata* in flower; the flower-heads of this 1 m high shrub comprise white papery bracts and a brownish centre of tiny tubular flowers.



*Ixodia in flower* Photo: Phil Rayment

The Monday morning walks were in the Ironbark Basin near Point Addis, added to the Great Otway NP in 2006-2007 to protect its large remnant of Red Ironbark forest.

Here, an attractive Koorie Track led us to a lookout with superb views along the coast. The lower reaches of the track were dominated by Red Ironbark *Eucalyptus tricarpa*, with plants of interest including Propellor Plant *Spyridium vexilliferum* and Slender Velvet-bush *Lasiopetalum baueri*, with narrow heavily veined leaves up to 8 cm long. Higher up, we moved into a different EVC, dominated by Messmate Stringybark *Eucalyptus oblique* and Grass-trees *Xanthorrhoea* sp.

We bid our farewells over lunch on the cliff-tops at Point Addis, grateful to ANGAIR for hosting such an enjoyable, well organised gathering.

Philip Rayment

*Estelle Adams kindly provided the following write-up of a further camp excursion.*

## **Anglesea - Fire can both destroy and save a heathland.**

Since the 1983 bushfires, the heathlands within the Great Otway National Park have been invaded by Coast Tea-tree and Coast or Sallow Wattle, both of which are prolific producers of seeds. Since that time, ANGAIR has worked with other groups, including Friends of Eastern Otways and Parks Victoria contractors, to remove environmental weeds. In the area we visited for this excursion, at the heathlands between Anglesea and Aireys Inlet, various methods are being trialled to ascertain the most effective method for their control.

Our leader, Neil Tucker, is the present Vice-president of ANGAIR. Before his retirement, he had been an environmental contractor with Parks Victoria and, at our first site, spoke of the difficulties associated with this work. The heath is very dense and it was exhausting work walking through the shrubbery to locate the weeds. Care had to be taken if sprays were used because of the close proximity of other plants. This area looked to be fairly clear of those weeds, but a scattering of Sallow Wattle plants were poking their heads through the other shrubs. The field naturalists who attempted to assist in their removal by pulling out the smaller ones found that if they had reached any size at all, it was difficult to do so.

In 2007, a further area was burnt and, once again, the environmental weeds appeared in numbers. At this second section of heathland, scientific research is being carried out to see if the Sallow Wattle is best controlled by the use of herbicides or mechanical means. Six plots have been pegged with different methods or combination of methods being used in each. To reach those plots, we had to push our way through dense stands of Sallow Wattle and other shrubs. I followed a line of others up the hill, but it was still difficult to force a path as the wattle was head high. When I looked through a gap to where others were also moving uphill, all I could see of them were hats which seemed to be floating above the shrubs. The plot where the weeding had been most effective included a combination of methods, amongst them being cutting and painting and hand-weeding.

At the final site we visited, extensive work had been done during a number of years, resulting in a healthy, attractive heathland. To reach that stage, many hours of arduous work were required. Amongst the plants were orchids, Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*), Hibbertia, a clump of medium height Eucalyptus and the Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*), the flower-spikes of which were providing a feast of sweetness for a pair of tan-coloured bullants diving head first into their depths.

Estelle Adams

## **REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 23.5.2011**

### **General Meetings & Excursions**

**Friday 24 June:** Botanical Illustration – Laurie Andrews

**Saturday 25 June:** Gunyah Gunyah Rainforest Reserve. Meet 10am at Boolarra Rail Trail Reserve carpark.

**Friday 22 July:** Winter Members' Night

**Saturday 23 July:** Melbourne Zoo by train. Arrive Flinders St 11.21am. Leave 4.30pm. Train times (leave, return): Traralgon (9.19, 6.33), Morwell (9.28, 6.21), Moe (9.42, 6.07), Warragul (10.01, 5.49).

**Botany Group:** Saturday 2 July – Mosses at Tarra Bulga NP. Meet 9.15 at Mexican

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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Restaurant, Traralgon for carpool, or 10am at Tarra Bulga Visitor Centre. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 5 July – Traralgon Reserves. Meet by 9.30am at Traralgon Railway Reservoir Conservation Reserve (TRRCR), Hickox St. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1617.60. Investment A/c \$13,235.42.

## **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

Business pending: walkie talkie sets for convoys; tape recorder.

LVFNC Web page has been repaired. Would like to improve website, regularly updating it with information about excursions, and photos. Would like a club member to take it on. Could consider paying someone.

Membership list – treasurer has updated list for committee.

Spotlights – David Mules found a rechargeable LED spotlight for ~\$100 which lasts for several hours. Bird Group may find them useful, particularly at camps.

Summer Camp at Falls Creek 20-23 January. Have booked Schuss Lodge, Parallel St, Falls Creek. Well equipped self-catering spacious lodge with twin or double rooms with ensuites and linen supplied. Cost quoted is \$102 for 3 nights. We will need to supply our own food.

August speaker, Susan Taylor is overseas for 4 months so suggested we swap her to later in the year. Alternative is to ask David Farrar to talk on the Fox control program in Corner Inlet and the parks and reserves in that area.

Swift Parrot-regent Honeyeater surveys conducted last weekend, and week either side. Request for birdos to participate. Will send Alix's email for future contact.

Business meeting – consider meeting in the afternoon 3-5pm. See if room available on Mondays.

Reserves managed by Latrobe City will no longer have set representatives from groups

such as ours. Structure and details still being thrashed out.

Parks Vic has been putting up signage and clearing rubbish from a number of reserves: Rosedale Flora Reserve, Gormandale Wildflower Reserve and Flora Reserve, Yinnar (Colley's Rd).

New set up at GM with screen on west wall worked well, so will continue it.

Munro excursion in November is considered too late for best flowering times so will swap with Duck Point excursion in October.

Consumer Affairs info has been further investigated by Alix. We no longer need to have a common seal. ABN info needs residential address updated. We will respond to an expression of interest for a Community Groups Expo at Old Gipps town Sun 9 Oct.

## **Conservation Matters**

Review of the Code of Practice for Fire Management on Public Land – Jackie attended meeting in Warragul 18 May. Many stakeholders attended and meeting discussed issues that arose after Bushfires Royal Commission.

## **FOR THE DIARY**

**Club Spring Camp 9-11 September at Cape Conron** – a month earlier than previous years to avoid a clash with the SEANA Spring Camp at Wonthaggi.

Accommodation is a combination of lodge and cabins with bunk beds. There are also wilderness retreats available – more private (and luxurious) but more expensive. Camp sites also available. Lodge and cabins have modern kitchens with gas stove, oven, microwave, fridge and freezer. Outdoor wood BBQs available. BYO food and bedding, etc. Website: [www.conran.net.au](http://www.conran.net.au)

Full details and list next month.

**SEANA Spring Camp 28 Oct – 1 Nov at Wonthaggi.** This is being organized by FNCV over the Melbourne Cup weekend. Participants will need to book their own accommodation. For information email: [seanacamp@fncv.org.au](mailto:seanacamp@fncv.org.au) or write to SEANA Camp, c/- FNCV Locked Bag 3, Blackburn 3130 or ☎ 03 9877 9860 (Monday-Tuesday during office hours).

## TOORONGO FALLS

The beautiful colours of autumn leaves and the nip in the air were a constant reminder of the season as we drove towards Noojee. Down in the valley, the layer of cloud was beginning to waft upwards in the sunshine, the treetops only a ghostly outline through the thinning mist.

From Noojee we travelled back to the Trestle Bridge. Completed in 1919 to transport timber by train from forests around Noojee, it has since been restored by DSE. Its 210 metres length spans the valley created by Ridell Creek, a tributary of the Latrobe River. Steps up the seep slope on each side of the amphitheatre made easy access to the 21 metre high deck. Beneath the tall Messmates (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) and Narrow-leafed Peppermints (*E. radiata*), banks of tree ferns and Silver wattles (*Acacia dealbata*) clothed the hillsides. Scattered amongst them were a few Mountain Grey (*E. cypellocarpa*) and Manna Gums (*E. viminalis*), which Wendy's father has said can be told apart as the trunks of the Manna Gums shine like a new shilling.

From the bridge, we caught glimpses through the foliage of the chattering stream as it scurried over its rocky bed. Amongst the greenery were the compound leaves of the greenery were the compound leaves of the Elderberry Panax (*Polyscias sambucifolia*), and Ken Harris pointed out Himalayan Honeysuckle, an undesirable weed, which he had always known as Elisha's Tears, though he was unable to tell us why Elisha was crying about it. Flitting about overhead were Brown Thornbills, an Eastern Spinebill and a Grey Fantail while at the end of the deck a shapely Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpus cupressiformis*) drooped its feathery green branchlets above a red-capped fungus, possibly *Russula persanguinea*.

We explored a short way up the track that passed beneath the bridge then, while some left in their cars for the falls area, the fungi enthusiasts gathered around an old stump in the picnic area to photograph a shelf fungus with a powdery brown surface and mustard-coloured pores and a colony of the yellow-coloured *Gymnopilus junonius*. Gilled, with the fruiting bodies rising from a common

base (caespitose), they can grow to 40cm across.

After the dimness of the forest road the rich colours of autumn, deep burgundy, bronze and yellow glowed on the trees beside the road through Noojee.

For much of the way, Falls Road follows the Toorongo River. A long section of the valley was V-shaped with steep sides, while parts had gentler, curving slopes cleared for farming. Then the valley widened out to a narrow flood plain which the river had created between high hills before it disappeared from sight among tall eucalypts and tree ferns. The rippling water meandered across the flatter area, constantly wandering back and forth. At one meander, where the stream made a sharp, almost right-angled turn, the outer wall of the meander was protected by a barrier of metal to prevent further undercutting and erosion. Across the flood plain, the land had been cleared for a well-maintained farm. Black cattle browsed in lush green pastures and deciduous trees grew among the natives lining the river's banks. With their leaves turning gold under the warmth of autumn sunshine, it was an idyllic pastoral scene.

The car park at the falls was surrounded by thick forest. Among the trees were tall, healthy Myrtle Beeches (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) with just a few coloured leaves. A surprise was an Avocado tree. Birds seen along the road and in the car park included a Kookaburra, a Wonga Pigeon, a King Parrot, Magpies and Magpie Larks, Crimson Rosellas, Wood Ducks and Pied Currawongs. Wrens flitted about the cars and a Lewin's Honeyeater was heard while we ate lunch. A Wedge-tailed Eagle soared high overhead, while a White-throated Treecreeper scampered up a tree, and Striated Thornbills darted through the foliage, and David spotted a Golden Whistler.

The river, swollen after recent rain, was in full voice as it raced over little rapids and around moss-covered rocks on its way down hill. However, the first section of the walk up the falls quickly became a fungi foray. Members of the *Calocera* species, a small spiky golden jelly fungus which Sally called



Pretty Horn, clustered round the top of a stump. Like steps up a tree trunk, *Pleurotus purpurea-olivaceus* specimens fanned out from small, lateral streams. The latter part of their name refers to the dark olive to purple-olive cap surface, which we couldn't see as we gazed up at them. In the ground were *Collybia butyracea* with their chestnut brown caps while *Crepidotus nephrodes* grew on another old tree. Sulphur Caps (*Hypholoma fasciculare*) with their convex tan-coloured caps were plentiful on one log.

Along the track, beneath tall straight eucalypts and the arching fronds of tree ferns, we walked through the luxuriant landscape we associate with wet rainforests. Mosses, liverworts, hornworts and lichens grew in abundance on every available space – fallen logs, stumps, rocks, the banks of the path. The intriguing grey liverworts with their leafy scalloped edges hid in dark areas. Growing out of its moss bed was one of the smaller fungi, the pale tan *Rickenella fibula* and, growing on leaf litter, were several tiny members of the *Mycena* species. Delicate Filmy Fern (*Hymenophyllum cupressiforme*) provided a lacy covering. Amongst the smaller ferns were the Strap-water Ferns (*Blechnum patersonii*) near the water, and fanning out from the centre of a mossy rock were the narrow fronds of the Necklace Fern (*Asplenium flabellifolium*). Also edging the path was Indian Weed (*Sigesbeckia orientalis*), which is actually an indigenous shrub, with lance-shaped leaves and yellow flowers, and Forest Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle geraniifolia*), a delicate trailing plant with toothed leaves and tiny white flowers. On the end of a log was a spectacular clump of the Rainbow Fungus (*Trametes versicolor*); in the dim light of the forest its fan-shaped surface had a velvet look with grey-green and reddish-brown stripes and an apricot colour where it was attached to the log. Every now and then there would be another view of white water, pouring over the rocks.

The main falls were an impressive sight with water leaping over each step. The bridges and viewing platforms had all been added since we last visited the falls during a long ago summer when only a trickle of water came down the rock wall. A log, stretching out towards the water, was liberally clothed

with Golden Curtain Crust fungi (*Stereum ostrea*), the first we saw of many logs with it massed along them, each seeming more spectacular than the previous one. Beside one patch rhizomorphs had formed a lacy white pattern on some bark. On another log grew tiny blue fungi with the long name, *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*, which stains a blue-green the wood on which it grows and is one of the cup fungi. Among the other fungi we discovered was the white jelly fungi, *Tremella fuciformis*, which is called White Brain, the white coral fungi *Clavicornia piperata* which has the common name Peppery Coral Fungus, the pale blue *Mycena interupta* which look like tiny umbrellas, the ghost fungus *Omphalotus nidiformis*, *Mutinus boninensis* which looked like pointed thick headless stalks, a clump of *Mycena marangania* with brown caps, and Earth Star (*Geastrum triplex*), the shelf fungus *Australoporus tasmanicus*, a tangle of mycelium wound around a tree trunk and, growing beside it, the amazing Horsehair fungus, the stems of which are like threads. On the top of a flat stump was an orangey-brown slime mould. The path we took led to the falls on the other tributary of the Toorong River then followed the creek as it tumbled down the slope between banks thick with tree ferns.

I wasn't listed to write this report and it actually belongs to many of those who were there. I was supplied with the paper to write on, given the lists of birds, plants and fungi and even some of the descriptive phrases I've used. Thank-you to you all.

Estelle Adams

## REMINDER

Subscriptions for 2011-12 are now overdue and will be cancelled if not paid.

Please see inside back cover for payment details.



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsl.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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JULY 2011

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# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 22 July

Winter Members' Night – open theme

Excursion: Saturday 23 July

Melbourne Zoo by train. Arrive Flinders St 11.21am, leave 4.30pm.

Bird Group:

Tuesday 2 August: Rokeby Rail Trail and Glen Cromie Park. Meet by 9.45am at Rokeby Hall, contact Alix for directions or if you want to car pool from Moe. Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> TRU Wetlands survey – contact Alix in advance. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 30 July: Using botanical keys with Asteraceae as the subject, 10am at Ron Carey's, 332 Normanby St, Warragul. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 26 August

David Farrar – China's Black Bears

Excursion: Saturday 27 August

Microscope Workshop on Freshwater Invertebrates

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

---

FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

---

FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

---

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

---

FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

---

SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 12 AUGUST 2011**

Subscriptions for 2011-12 are now overdue – see inside back cover for details.

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

## JUNE EXCURSION TO GUNYAH GUNYAH RAINFOREST RESERVE

On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2011, our field excursion took us to the Gunyah Gunyah Rainforest Reserve on the Grand Ridge Road. The Davids (Mules and Stickney) had done an advanced reconnoitre and found no tracks leading into the reserve, so we simply walked through the reserve along the Grand Ridge Road, studying the flora and fauna along the way.

The area was dominated by the Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) trees and although they are all regrowth from a time when the area was mostly cleared, they were still enormous tall trees. The vegetation was mostly typical of wet sclerophyll forest and despite the reserve name there was not much sign of rainforest. We did see a few Myrtle Beech trees (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) but not a single Southern Sassafras.

Ferns were a good feature, with Fishbone Waterfern (*Blechnum nudum*) common along the roadside although Fireweed (*Senecio linearifolius*) was the commonest roadside plant. Rough Tree Ferns (*Cyathea australis*) were abundant and it was not surprising on the top of the ridge that the Soft Tree Fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*) was less frequent, but we did find several of them close to the road.



Perhaps the loveliest of the ferns was a patch of Silky Fan-fern (*Sticherus urceolatus*). Most books show this as *S. tener*, but that species has now been split and we would

need to visit the Otways to see the true *S. tener*.

We found two other waterferns, the Hard Water-fern (*Blechnum watsii*) and the smaller ray Waterfern (*Blechnum fluviatile*) and the lovely Batwing Fern (*Histiopteris incisa*). Mother Shield-fern (*Polystichum proliferum*) was abundant in the undergrowth back from the road and Austral Bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*) was not uncommon by the roadside.

I had hoped to see plenty of epiphytes (ferns and mosses), but there were surprisingly few. The only epiphytic fern we saw was the Kangaroo Fern (*Microsorium pustulatum*) and about the only other epiphyte was one plant of Fieldia (*Fieldia australis*), with one white tubular flower.

The other plant in flower was the Mountain Correa (*Correa lawrenciana*). These large shrubs had lots of their white tubular flowers open and it was nice to see several Eastern Spinebills feeding on the flowers.

Climbers included both local clematis species. *Clematis aristata* was commonest but we did find one *Clematis glycinoides*. I also found one plant of Twining Silk-pod (*Parsonsia brownii*).

Three different daisy-bushes were found. The Snowy Daisy-bush (*Olearia lirata*) was common, but here and there we also found *O. phlogopappa* and *O. argophylla*.

The wattles were represented by Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and Silver Wattle (*A. dealbata*), both of which were plentiful.

There were lots of Austral Mulberry (*Hedycarya angustifolia*) shrubs, quite a few Mountain Pepper (*Tasmannia lanceolata*) and a particularly attractive form of the Eldeberry Panax (*Polyscias sambucifolia*) with very slender pinnae on the leaves. At the furthest point of our walk we found one Muttonwood (*Rapanea howittiana*) tree.

Weeds were not prevalent although Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) was plentiful by the road's edge and we saw lots of Blackberries and Spear Thistles.

On the walk back to the cars a Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiatus*) was noticed, identified from other pines by having needles in

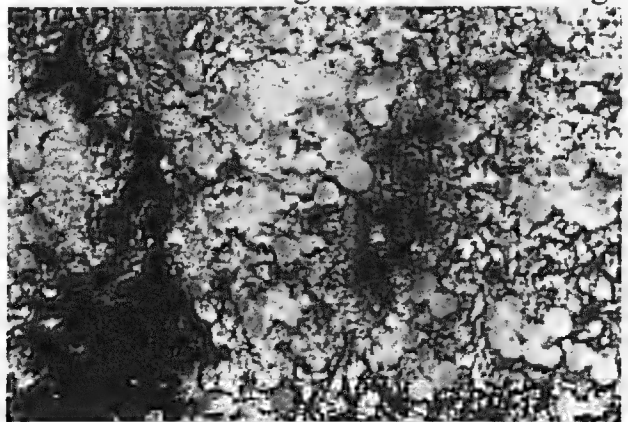
bunches of three rather than just two. I also noticed a small patch of Elisha's Tears or Himalayan Honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*). This weed of wet forests was also seen in our April outing to Toorong Falls. Estelle asked in her report what Elisha was crying about. It seems (2 Kings 8:11) that he wept at his foreseeing of the Syrians overrunning Israel.

We lunched near the cars on the site of the old Gunyah Hotel (1902-1942). It is now just a grassy clearing near the road. There were several large puddles around and I was interested to see another weed was common in the puddles. This was the Water Starwort (*Callitriche stagnalis*) and it led me to speculate as to how such a small water plant with no obvious means of seed dispersal manages to find its way into isolated puddles throughout the wetter areas. The puddles also contained mosquito wrigglers and



tadpoles. Here is one of the tadpoles, but I have not been able to identify it.

After lunch we took a shorter walk down the Hatchery Road. We did not find much variety in the flora and got distracted by the lichens growing on the steep roadside bank. One lichen was particularly common here *Baeomyces heteromorphus*. This attractive lichen consists of a greenish mat with large



numbers of pinkish fruiting bodies looking like tiny fungi.

Another lichen caught our eyes, consisting of white branching stems standing out from

the steep roadside bank. I was not able to identify this lichen but I think it is a species of *Cladonia*.



Beyond the lichens we did find a few different plants. We passed through a patch of Messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*). We also found two more species of wattles. We saw one patch and one large tree of the Mountain Hickory Wattle (*Acacia obliquinervia*) so named for its conspicuously off-centre main vein in each glaucous phyllode. We also found a few Varnish Wattle (*A. verniciflua*) at the end of our walk.

We didn't see much wildlife in the area. One Swamp Wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*) crossed the road and David Mules recorded some 18 birds. Most of us heard the singing of the Superb Lyrebird and the Eastern Whipbird. Early on David spotted a group of Varied Sitellas and towards the end he also found a Mistletoe bird (although none of the botanists spotted any mistletoe)!

I can provide a full list of the 62 plant species that we recorded.

Ken Harris

## DOG VOMIT SLIME MOULD

Early one cool dewy morning in late April I noticed a large patch of a creamy looking substance on a pile of wood chips I'd raked out of the woodshed. I was sure it hadn't been there the night before, and my first thought was that the dog had vomited there. Having emerged from the house without my contact lenses in I got down close and



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peered at it (I'm short sighted, so can see things very well if I get really close to them). It looked quite disgusting, but I noticed on the edge it seemed to have threads spreading out like the hyphae of a fungus. I very gingerly poked it with my finger and decided it was not dog's vomit. By the end of the day its colour had changed to pinkish cinnamon and its surface was more solid, and it appeared to have spread.

A few days later on our excursion I described it to Ken Harris, who told me there was a dog vomit slime mould. That evening I 'googled' it, and found that's what I had. Its scientific name is *Fuligo septica*. The following two excellent sites explain slime moulds and show lots of good pictures of the dog vomit slime mould. They are: [waynesword.palomar.edu/slime1.htm](http://waynesword.palomar.edu/slime1.htm) and [botit.botany.wisc.edu/toms\\_fungi/june99.html](http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/toms_fungi/june99.html)

Slime moulds were originally placed in the kingdom Fungi but now most authorities place them in the kingdom Protoctista (Protista). Most fungi are composed of threadlike filaments of eukaryotic cells called hyphae, collectively referred to as a mycelium. Slime moulds in their vegetative state are composed of an acellular mass of protoplasm with no cell walls, called a plasmodium. The plasmodium moves like a giant amoeba, flowing over the surface as it ingests organic matter. The plasmodium can transform into fruiting bodies within hours, and these can take many forms. My one formed a cushion like structure containing numerous spores. A day later it was fairly dry and under the surface was a mass of brown powder.

Wendy Savage

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 20.6.2011

### General Meetings & Excursions

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**Saturday 23 July:** Melbourne Zoo by train. Arrive Flinders St 11.21am. Leave 4.30pm. Train times (leave, return): Traralgon (9.19, 6.33), Morwell (9.28, 6.21), Moe (9.42, 6.07), Warragul (10.01, 5.49).

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**Saturday 27 August:** Microscope Workshop on Freshwater Invertebrates, details to be advised.

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**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1885.10. Investment A/c \$13,348.20.

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

Business pending: walkie talkie sets for convoys; tape recorder.

LVFNC Web page – if nobody from the membership is able to assist, look for professional help to update with reports, photos and monthly arrangements.

Spotlights – waiting to see if there is any response from Alix's letter to TRUenergy.

Representatives on Latrobe City Reserve committees – no further info available.

The SEANA camp which was to be held at Wonthaggi on 29 October to 1 November has been relocated to Phillip Island. The base for activities will be the San Remo Golf Club. Participants need to arrange own accommodation.

The club donated \$1000 for signage at Ollerton Avenue Reserve – this has been completed and installed.

The Australian Naturalists' Network (ANN) 2012 Get-Together will be held in Canberra on 13-21 October 2012. Trips will be organized to surrounding nature parks and places of interest as well as visits to relevant national institutions. Details available from Wendy.

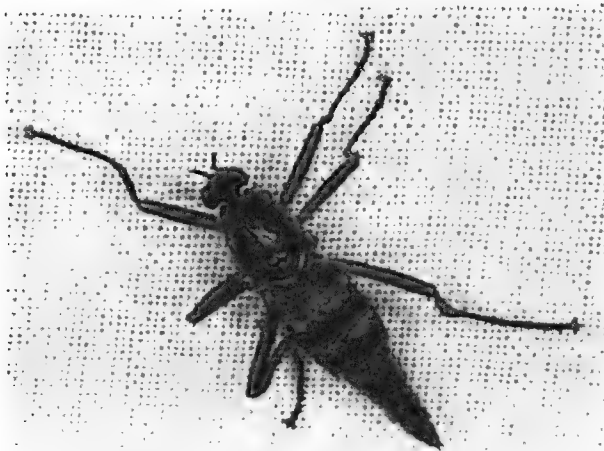
Grand Strzelecki Track – HVP solicitors in America have resolved their concerns about public liability. The latest hold up with track works centres around DSE requiring offsets for the land that is being used for the track.

### Conservation Matters

Nothing to report.

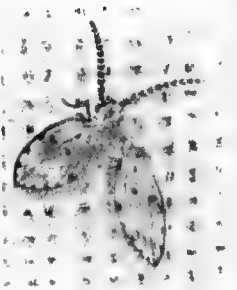
## NOT ALL FLIES FLY

On 16<sup>th</sup> April 2011, I took my moth attracting gear over to Mount Worth State Park, to give a demonstration to the Friends of Mount Worth. The weather was perfect, but it was late in the season and was not a great success, with only 13 different sorts of moths. Moths are not all that is attracted to the light however and crawling about on the ground underneath the sheet, someone noticed an unusual looking insect. It had no wings, so couldn't land on the sheet, so I picked it up and put it on the sheet to make photography easier.



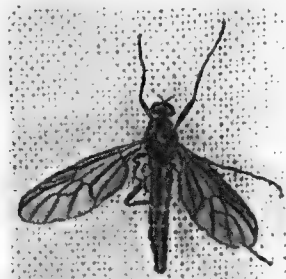
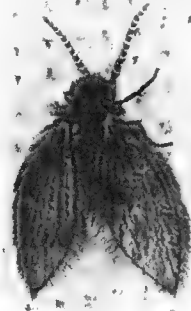
I was greatly puzzled by this creature. It clearly had no wings, but had all the appearances of being an adult, especially the eyes and antennae. I know of and had encountered several species of moths with flightless females, but the little short antennae said it was definitely not a moth. I also knew of one bug species with a flightless female, the so-called Bird of Paradise Fly - *Callipappus rubiginosus*. We encountered the flightless female of this one near Diggers Island on a Field Nats outing and I wrote about it last year, but it did not look at all like this one. My best guess was that it was a flightless female wasp, but when I asked at the Melbourne Museum, they pointed out that it had no wasp-waist! The museum did know exactly what it was and I was shown specimens of the Wingless Soldier Fly - *Boreoides subulatus* in the family Stratiomyidae. It therefore proved to be an oxymoron, a 'flightless fly'. The female fly is flightless, but the smaller male is a fairly normal looking fly.

Only 9 days later, I was after moths again in Fosters Gully in Morwell National Park and there were several large flies on the sheet. They closed their wings along their bodies, making them hard to identify, but eventually one held its wings spread and gave me the chance of a quick picture. When I got home I looked at my books and found that these were the males of the same Wingless Soldier Fly and I later confirmed that by looking at museum specimens.



I suppose that the lack of moths at Mt. Worth, meant that I looked more closely at the other visitors to the light, and I noticed some tiny little insects that had the appearance of being minute e moths. I took some photographs and was able to assess that they were only 3 mm long, but I hadn't at first any idea what they were. With a little help, I eventually discovered that they belong to a family of very small flies, known as Moth Flies - Psychodidae. Like all flies they have only 2 wings, but in the moth flies these wings are quite hairy.

Having noticed these first moth flies at Mt. Worth, I started watching for them each time I went mothing and there was a lull in the arrival of moths. In Morwell National Park a few nights later I noticed a fairly similar if not the same moth fly on my sheet. I then saw another tiny insect, so pale that it was almost invisible on the white sheet and taking its photograph I found I had another, but different Moth Fly, this time with white wings instead of black. Scaling from my photo, this one was even smaller, a mere 2.5mm long.



Ken Harris

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

The following 3 articles are reports from the SEANA Camp at Camp Rumbug last Spring.

## AGNES FALLS, WELSHPOOL CEMETERY AND TOORA BIRD HIDE

Leader: Rohan Bugg Facilitator: Alix Williams

A very blustery and showery Saturday afternoon somewhat limited the birding and botanising on this otherwise enjoyable excursion.

A Black-shouldered Kite was observed en route to the Agnes Falls via Toora and its nearby wind farms. The 69 metre high falls were magnificent in high flow. Bird sightings here included Red-browed Finches, Brown Thornbill, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Rufous Whistler, a Currawong, Grey Shrike-thrush and Grey Fantail.

A somewhat rushed look at the Welshpool Cemetery highlighted the Orange-lipped Caladenia; other orchids seen included the Large and Small Duck-orchids. The Wedding Bush *Ricinocarpos pinifolius* was spectacular in abundant white flowers.

At the very blowy Toora Bird Hide, sightings included Crested Tern, Pied and Sooty Oyster-catchers, Eastern Curlew, Grey Cormorant, Black Swan and, not surprisingly, Silver Gull.

Alix Williams

## WILSONS PROM – BIDDYS TRACK

Leader: Dr Mary Ellis Facilitator: Julie Parker

Seventeen participants gathered in overcast, cold and windy conditions with rain threats fortunately amounting to only a few drops from time to time.

Mary explained the monitoring/ survey program that she, along with approximately 24 volunteers and Parks Victoria staff, have been conducting since the fires, on a monthly basis. We stopped at the pump house behind the Tidal River village where the 2005 fire started. That was a "controlled" burn that got away, burning for three weeks.

A Canadian ranger, on exchange, set up the survey plots, with 110 permanent quadrats each of 1 square metre area. All growth is recorded and photos taken; GPS grid references are also noted. There are

permanent markers over which a polypipe frame is placed and all growth recorded, along with information such as plant height and method of propagation (if known). Any mosses, lichen and fungi are also noted. Staff at the Arthur Rylah Institute are now analyzing data collected to date to help guide future park management.

There are control plots (not burnt), plots that were severely burnt, some from mosaic burns and some from low intensity burn sites.

We wandered along a track through Coast Tea-tree, *Leptospermum laevigatum*. There was an area where these plants were old – perhaps 25 years – and shading everything, hence very little undergrowth. Mary thought that such areas need a fire regime of 25 years to promote succession.

In another area which had been burnt, there was a mass of *L. laevigatum* regeneration at a density of around 400 plants per square metre – each plant can produce something like 2500 seeds! We had some discussion as to why such density is occurring – the Coast Banksia, *B. integrifolia*, has not regenerated after the fire as would be expected, having been affected at this site by dieback. Therefore no shade or competition for the tea-tree. It should be noted, though, that at other sites in the park the banksia is recovering well.

Further on we entered another EVC – damp gully with greater diversity and increased growth height – Brown Stringybark, *Eucalyptus baxteri*, and Swamp Paperbark, *Melaleuca ericifolia*, were dominant.

Other plants noted *en route*

A tiny caladenia

Lots of leaves of Slaty Helmet-orchid

*Caladenia parva*, a small spider-orchid

*Gastrodia sesamoides* not quite flowering

Sea Box, *Alyxia buxifolia*, just coming into flower

Coast Beard-heath, *Leucopogon parviflorus*

Showy Parrot-pea, *Dillwynia sericea*

Large-leaf Bush-pea, *Pultenaea daphnoides*

Running Postman, *Kennedia prostrata*

Butterfly Flag, *Diplarrena moraea*, the individual flowers of which last just one day

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

Silky Guinea-flower, *Hibbertia sericea*

Coast Sword-sedge, *Lepidosperma gladiatum*

Brown Spurge

Common Correa, *C. reflexa*, flowering magnificently

Wallflower Orchid, *Diuris corymbosa*

Very little in the way of birds was seen or heard, apart from the odd Wattle Bird, White-browed Scrub-wren and Grey Fantail.

Julie Parker

## FOSTER AND TOORA – PLANTS AND BIRDS

Leader: Rohan Bugg Facilitator: Ken Savage

This excursion visited some bushland reserves around Foster for bush birds, raptors, orchids, wildflowers and old gold diggings. By way of contrast, participants travelled on to the Toora bird hide for water birds in mangroves, saltmarsh and coastal grasslands.

### Foster reserves:

#### Orchids:

White Caladenia, Common Bird Orchid, Tall Greenhood, Nodding Greenhood, leaves of Autumn Bird Orchid and Small Tongue-orchid, Mayfly.

#### Other heathland flowers:

A veritable carpet included *Bauera rubioides*, *Burchardia umbellata*, Tall Sundews, *Pultenaea stricta*, *Pimelia linifolia*, *Xanthorrhoea minor*, an *Epacris* sp., *Sprengelia incarnata*, *Olearia lirata*, *Melaleuca squarrosa*, *Billardiera scandens*, Elderberry *Panax* and *Goodenia ovata*.

#### Birds:

Sitella, White-throated Tree-creeper, Spotted Pardalote, Crested Shrike-tit, Red Wattle-bird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Yellow Robin, Grey Shrike-thrush, Olive Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Golden Whistler, Kookaburra, Brown Gerygone, Magpie, Australian Raven, Brown Thornbill.

### Toora bird hide:

Birds seen included –

Eastern Curlew, Pied Oystercatcher, Swamp Harrier, Little Black and Little Pied

Cormorants, Great Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Crested Tern, Grey Butcher-bird and Mudlark.

Ken Savage

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR AUGUST

**David Farrar** is a ranger with Parks Victoria. In June 2006 he joined an Earthwatch expedition to China into the remote mountains of Woolong and the Tibetan Plateau surveying Asiatic Black Bears (Moon Bear) and Giant Panda. During a 22 day period he took part in establishing camera traps on transect lines in the mountains, searched for bear signs, and interviewed local villagers with interpreters to understand what other wildlife was known to the people in these remote villages. David also visited Jill Robinson, the founder of Animals Asia, at her Chengdu Bear Rescue Centre, where bear species are rescued from bear bile farming; the majority of those farmed are Asiatic Black Bears. The Earthwatch research on the Black bears was to determine how successful they are in remote areas of China and Tibet, and reserves that have had no survey before were being investigated for signs of Black bears.

## FOR THE DIARY

**Club Spring Camp 9-11 September at Cape Conron.** Accommodation is a combination of lodge and cabins with bunk beds. There are also wilderness retreats available – more private (and luxurious) but more expensive. Camp sites also available. Lodge and cabins have modern kitchens with gas stove, oven microwave, fridge and freezer, and outdoor wood BBQs. BYO food and bedding etc. List and cost at GM.

**SEANA Spring Camp 28 Oct-1 Nov (Cup Weekend) at Phillip Island. Please note change of venue.** This is being organized by FNCV. The base for activities will be the San Remo Golf Club. Participants will need to book their own accommodation. For information email: [seanacamp@fncv.org.au](mailto:seanacamp@fncv.org.au), write to SEANA Camp, C/- FNCV, Locked Bag 3, Blackburn 3130, ☎ 03 9877 9860 (Monday-Tuesday during office hours).

**SUBS ARE OVERDUE & MEMBERSHIP WILL BE CANCELLED IF NOT PAID**

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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AUGUST 2011

Issue No. 544



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



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## LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 26 August

Excursion: Saturday 27 August

Bird Group:

Botany Group:

David Farrar – China's Black Bears

Microscope Workshop on Freshwater Invertebrates at Trafalgar High School from 10am to 12.30

Tuesday 6 September: Witt's Gully & TRU bush. Meet by 9.30am at the gate off Marretts Rd near the Hernes Oak overpass, or contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au) for directions.

Saturday 3 September: Forest Rd Labertouche in Bunyip SP. Carpool 9.15 at Traralgon Mexican Restnt, or meet on road to Labertouche signposted off Princes Hwy (near BP service stn). Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Friday 9 – Sunday 11 September

Meeting: Friday 23 September

Excursion: Saturday 24 September

Club Spring Camp at Cape Conran. Details page 6.

Eleisha Keogh – Freshwater Inflows & the Gipps. Lakes

Mt Hedrick & environs. Meet 10am Heyfield Wetlands Centre, or 9.15 carpool at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

---

FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 8 SEPTEMBER 2011

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

## MOSES AT TARRA-BULGA NP

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July the Botany group travelled to Balook to visit Tarra-Bulga National Park and explore the variety of mosses and liverworts to be found there.

We spent the morning walking round the Tarra nature walk and of course there were mosses, liverworts and ferns in profusion. We spent most of an hour and half travelling about 300 metres, but then accelerated and completed the circuit in time for lunch. Mosses and liverworts are on the ground on fallen branches, on rocks and also as epiphytes. I expected that they would be common on all the Soft Tree-ferns, but it was fascinating to see that they were almost entirely absent except sometimes on the bottom 20 cm. The epiphytes on the Soft Tree-ferns were mostly ferns, together with *Fieldia (Fieldia australis)* in flower with its lovely white elongated bells. Three Filmy-ferns were very common as was the Bristle-fern, and we also found a few of the much less common Slender Filmy-fern – *Hymenophyllum rarum*. The Mother Spleenwort, Leathery and Shiny Film-ferns were all seen as epiphytes on the tree-ferns and the Kangaroo Fern grows as an epiphyte over many tree branches. There were a couple of exceptions. Two Soft Tree-ferns had almost horizontal trunks and on these the mosses and liverworts replaced the filmy-ferns. The other main tree-fern in Tarra is the Slender Tree-fern – *Cyathea cunninghamii*. Slender Tree-ferns have almost smooth trunks, very different from the fibrous Soft-Tree-ferns and we found Slender Tree-ferns covered with liverworts (and possibly mosses) and with none of the filmy-ferns. In one case the liverworts coated the stem to a considerable height as if it were wrapped in a blanket. The epiphytic mosses thrived on the trees in the area and that meant mainly the Myrtle-beech and the Southern Sassafras.

We also saw the other two tree-ferns. Rough Tree-ferns are common above the fern gully, but we only saw them at the Tarra Falls and in the afternoon at Bulga. The scarcest species is the Skirted Tree-fern – *Cyathea x marcescens*. This is believed to be a hybrid between The Rough and Slender Tree-ferns and we saw one good example, with the

remnants of many years' old fronds skirting the trunk.

In all we found 24 different ferns, including 5 different *Blechnum* species.

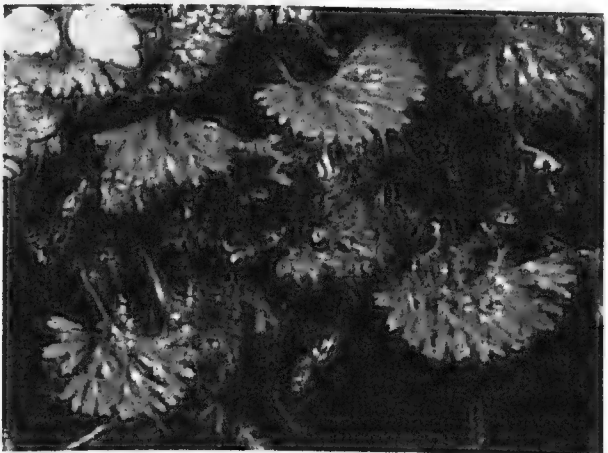
Mosses and Liverworts were everywhere but very few that we could recognise in the field. I photographed and subsequently identified 10 different mosses and 6 different liverworts and I am sure there were many more of the smaller species that we overlooked.

One little liverwort was intriguing as it looked so like a filmy-fern, but arranged as a



half-circle rather than a typical fern frond. I had difficulty identifying it and think it is probably *Symphyogyna podophylla*.

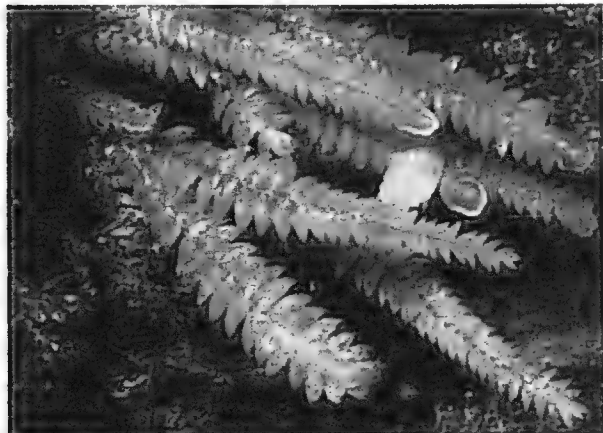
Similar but thicker and darker is a more familiar species *Hymenophyllum flabellatum*



and we found several spectacular patches.

One of my favourites among the mosses is *Weymouthia mollis*. It is sort of epiphytic, but instead of clinging to its host, it hangs in long skeins from the branches of the trees and shrubs in the wet gully.

Another attractive moss was *Cyathophorum bulbosum*, which looks more like a



miniature fern than a moss. It can also be mistaken for a liverwort, because unlike most mosses, it has an extra row of



underleaves of a different shape on the underside of each stem.

We lunched at Tarra and then moved up to Bulga for an afternoon walk. We diverted for a moment looking at the flowering plants in the Bulga car park. The Balm Mint-bush - *Prostanthera melissifolia* thrives by the car park and while admiring it we found a number of interesting shrubs growing together. There was *Zieria arborescens* (Stinkwood), *Coprosma hirtella*, *Tasmannia lanceolata* (Mountain Pepper), *Pittosporum bicolor* and *Olearia lirata* all within a metre of the Mint-bush.

An enormous Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) had a coating of liverworts near its base which proved to be two species of *Lepidozia*, *L. ulothrix* and *L. laevifolia*. Walking round the fern gully we found there were fewer mosses than at Tarra and we did

not find any additional species of either mosses, liverworts or ferns.

## Mosses

*Cyathophorum bulbosum*  
*Dicranoloma menziesii*  
*Hypnodendron vitiense*  
*Leptotheca gaudichaudii*  
*Leucobryum candidum*  
*Papillaria flavolimbata*  
*Racopilum cuspidigerum*  
*Thuidiopsis sparsa*  
*Trachyloma planifolium*  
*Weymouthia mollis*

## Liverworts

*Hymenophyllum flabellatum*  
*Lepidozia laevifolia*  
*Lepidozia ulothrix*  
*Lunularia cruciata*  
*Symphyogyna podophylla*  
*Tylimanthus tenellus*

Ken Harris

## BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION JUNE 2011

Laurie Andrews led us through the history of botanical illustration that has influenced her work. Starting with an early codex, done in water colour on vellum, showing all parts of a plant for ID. Then printed herbals from 110AD used to identify plants for medicinal purposes. All copies being done in water colour until woodcut copying in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

By the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries painting could be termed "Nature observed" where the plant was depicted in its immediate environment. Copies were made by hand coloured engraving and lithographs prior to photography.

Sketches of plants found on voyages of discovery such as Humbolt to South America and Bauer with Flinders around Australia were sketched in every detail, often with colour swatches. Most botanical illustrations were completed after the voyages.

There has been a modern resurgence, in the last twenty years, of the classical illustration with parts separated out and magnified.

Laurie had never painted before her retirement but had done some botany at Uni. Her inspiration came from the fern gullies on their property at English's Corner in the Strzeleckis. She completed another year of Botany and did various art classes.

Classical illustration was shown in a very constrained pencil sketch that had been entered into a competition in NSW.

The Fern Series, now totalling thirteen, are each of a fern and its immediate environment of allied plants. Laurie makes a sketch decision quickly filling in little detail in position and usually digs up and replants the fern sample. She often needs more specimens of fronds to keep the same angles and shapes.

Laurie works in water colour paint with six colours, using a light lemon wash that provides for highlights later, then green details, mixing small amounts of green at a time making different shades that reflect natural variation. She works on 300gsm hot pressed water colour paper. Each work takes 2-3 months.

The fern series was the basis for an exhibition at the Sale Gallery but more works were required. Inspired by Humbolt, Laurie produced "The Profile of a Gippsland Fern Gully" a picture using pencil and paint to depict eucalypts, acacia and ferns.

After the computer presentation, we were able to leaf through a folio of work that included examples of the fern series, the profile, fungi, lichen and Laurie's recent paintings of insects.

Laurie Andrews' presentation was not only interesting and informative but delightful to see and hear from a person who so capably depicts aspects of their environment for others to appreciate.

Alix Williams

## SPOTLIGHTING

Spotlighting native wildlife can be an entertaining pastime whether on your own or with a group of friends, as the majority of wildlife is nocturnal. This makes night time the right time to view our amazing fauna.

So what does one need to go out spotlighting? It can be done with as little as a household torch and venturing out in your back yard at night to see what's about, or if you wish to be a bit more professional about it you can arm yourself with a spotlight of quality costing hundreds of dollars, available from shooting / sporting goods stores and some automotive retailers and, of course, on line. Better models will require a portable 12 volt DC battery as well. Make sure to obtain a sealed gel type to avoid messy and costly acid spills. Your battery can be housed in a small canvas bag for ease of transportation.

**Safety Note.** Disconnect your battery from your spotlight during transport as it may inadvertently turn on during transport and start a fire.

Currently most are Quartz halogen or of the sealed beam variety. Both work quite well with the draw back of being rather power hungry. If you are on foot a model of around 30 to 50 watts would be best.

Models of a 100 watts or more are best utilised in a vehicle or on very short excursions when spotlighting. If you are looking to purchase a new light. I would look at Lightforce and Powerbeam Brands.

New to the market are LED lights, LED standing for light emitting diodes. These lights are much more energy efficient giving days of run time, instead of hours with the current quartz halogen and sealed beam types. Currently there are very high performance LED lights being used by the military.

These are three times more powerful than what is currently available to the public at the moment. The technology is starting to filter through to the domestic market.

**What to look for in power ratings.** Lights are rated by two main methods. Candle power in which light is measured at the source; its (radiance), and the more important rating: Lumens; which refers to the amount of light that strikes an object (luminance). Now 70 lumens is quite bright. Available now are lights of 200 + which can turn night into day with the most extreme at 1000 +. These have issues with run times



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and require specialised batteries to keep them going.

**Animal Welfare.** The nocturnal eyes of native wildlife are adapted to low light conditions. Many of them have a mirror like membrane situated behind the retina called the tapetum, which reflects the light we see. When spotlighting, exposure to higher light levels than you are meant to have may damage your eyes. So don't stare into the spotlight and thus don't shine your light on animals with more sensitive eyes for prolonged or repeated times to minimize any possible damage to the animal.

**When looking for wildlife.** Hold the spotlight at your eye level to maximise your chances of seeing a reflection of your quarry's eyes. This is referred to as 'eye shine'. Searching from a vehicle will get you over more ground improving your chances. The thing to keep in mind when on foot while spotlighting is the j curve. After 20 minutes looking in one location your odds of seeing extra animals decreases dramatically as the animals move on after checking you out.

It would be a good idea to wear sturdy boots and full length clothing as you will not be looking where you are going or where you are putting your feet as trips and falls are to be expected. Think about taking along a pair of binoculars for those perched high in a tree.

Finally like most things that are fun a permit is required to spotlight native wildlife in Victoria. These can be obtained from the Department of Sustainability and Environment to be within the law.

Doug Van Opijnen

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 18.7.2011

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 26 August:** China's Black Bears – David Farrar

**Saturday 27 August:** Microscope Workshop on Freshwater Invertebrates at Trafalgar High School from 10-12.30.

**Friday 23 September:** Freshwater Inflows & the Gippsland Lakes – Eleisha Keogh

**Saturday 24 September:** Mt Hedrick & environs. Meet 10am at Heyfield Wetlands Centre or carpool at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant carpark 9.15.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 3 September – Forest Rd Labertouche in Bunyip SP. Carpool 9.15 Traralgon Mexican Restaurant, or meet on road to Labertouche signposted off Princes Hwy (near BP service station). Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 6 September - Witt's Gully & TRU Bush Block. Meet by 9.30am at the gate off Marretts Rd near the Hernes Oak overpass, or contact Alix if unsure. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1880.60. Investment A/c \$13,348.20.

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

Business pending: walkie talkie sets for convoys; tape recorder; Bon's books and reports.

LVFNC Web page – John Sunderland has offered to manage and improve it. John attended meeting and outlined options for its development. He is to set up a yahoo!7 group site which is free and offers some of the facilities that our club would use – shared messages, photos and event calendar. Members will be invited to register on this site.

Spotlight to be given to the club by TRUenergy. In process of purchase.

Spring Camp at Cape Conran – have booked 2 nights, but will see if Sunday night is available for those wishing to stay longer. Cost \$30/night/pp. Start list at GM with payment, Phil to plan program of activities.

VicRoads Princes Highway duplication – Traralgon to Sale. Information on the Traralgon East to Kilmany section which is currently in the planning stage and subject to an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) process. Jackie will look at details.

Sound system – investigate a better microphone for speaker as present one only effective when at full volume.



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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Club account signatories. Motion: We will add Lorna Long as a fourth signatory to the club account (two to sign). Current signatories are David Mules, David Stickney and Wendy Savage. Moved: D Mules. Seconded: K Harris. Passed.

*Muelleria* – Ken Harris has now received the latest copy.

## Conservation Matters

Annual audit report by Smartwood program for HVP sent to Phil by Suzie Zent. Report is critical and conclusion was that HVP are not currently meeting all requirements and need to address issues: logging track construction, use of some herbicides, and high conservation value forest classification compliance. Need to address these to maintain certification.

Eric Lubcke Reserve to be planted with 4000 understorey plants by Indigenous Design. Latrobe City Sustainability Dept contact for reserve is Brett McGennissen.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER

**Eleisha Keogh** is the Environmental Water Resources Officer for the West and East Gippsland Catchment Management Authorities. She has a science background and has worked in water and wetland management across Gippsland for a number of years. Eleisha has overseen investigations to improve understanding of the role of freshwater inflows in the health of the Gippsland Lakes system, and the application of this knowledge to water allocation and management decisions in the catchments of the Lakes.

## MELBOURNE ZOO BY TRAIN

It was a very select group (well we thought so anyway!) who ventured out on a crisp winter Saturday in July to travel by train to the Melbourne Zoo. The six from Traralgon and Warragul were met at Flinders St by Jack and Marja, and so eight of us continued to Royal Park.

We arrived at midday, so the first activity was lunch on a shared park bench in the sun; being good Field Nats we had all brought our own with us. Naturally the resident optimistic free range gulls, moorhens and a

pigeon turned up for titbits, but to no avail – not for want of trying though.

Heading off to find the big cats we passed a cage housing some gorgeous, golden-headed Gang Gang Cockatoos. Golden Headed Gang Gangs!!? So the notice on the cage proclaimed – we assumed the labelling hadn't caught up with the change of inhabitants. I don't know what kind of parrot they were, but splendid they were indeed. The lemurs that call the island in the lake home were presumably tucked up in their beds out of sight, so we had to be content with a few ducks and moorhens in the water.

The leopards seemed to be mostly asleep or resting at the back of their enclosures, and so rather difficult to see. Further on a lone bear was curled up in a corner. The main activity was the Rainbow Lorikeets splashing happily at the top of the waterfall. Behind some very substantial wire mesh fencing a magnificently maned lion paced back and forth, while his two companions rested under the bushes in the shade.

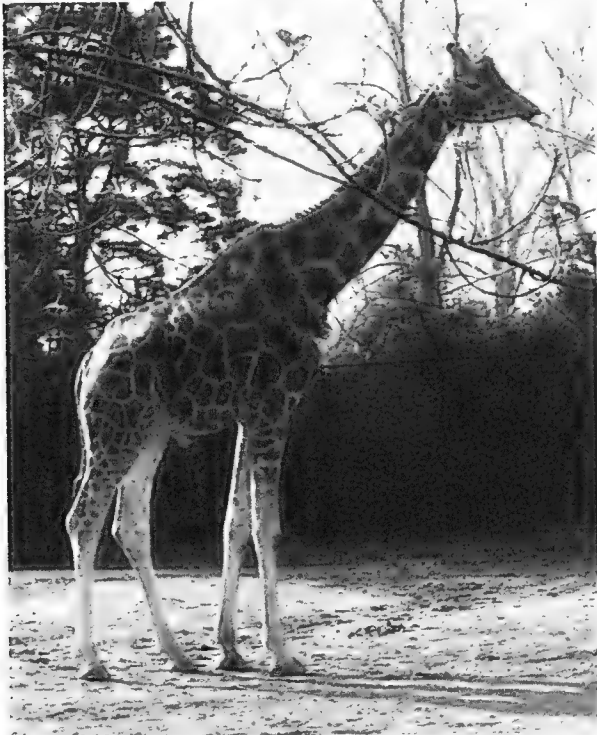
On the way to see the elephants we admired a couple of really cute little otters in a stream, and a Sumatran tiger sitting under the trees. Bong-Su was the subject of the "Meet the Keeper" session at the Elephant House. We were hoping he'd pop into his pool to retrieve a watermelon thrown there but he wasn't keen on taking a dip. In another enclosure there were several other elephants, including the two recent babies – so cute!

Orang-utans are always interesting – one of the young ones appeared to be trying to undo one of the bolts on a support wire. A mother with a tiny baby clinging to her was moving about in the large outside enclosure.

The highlight of the day had to be the giraffes. They are huge! I have never seen one in the flesh before and hadn't appreciated just how tall they are. They certainly dwarfed the zebras and the two rather scruffy-looking ostriches sharing their enclosure.

The Australian section is an interesting, large walk-through area with kangaroos and emus roaming or resting. An echidna was poking busily about its walled territory and

some koalas were vaguely 'active' in some tree top branches easily visible from below. Two sleeping wombats could be viewed through a clear window in their burrow, stretched out back to back.



The HIGHLIGHT of the day!

There is much more to see, but the few hours we had available were most enjoyable. The weather was glorious after the wind and rain of recent weeks – calm and sunny. We all agreed it was an excellent outing, if rather different from the usual types of Field Naturalists' excursions.

Gill Bremner

## **SPRING CAMP AT CAPE CONRAN**

**Fri 9 – Mon 11 September** with choice of 2 nights or 3 nights including Sunday.

The camp is self catered so BYO food and bedding. Lodge and cabins have modern kitchens with gas stove, oven, microwave, fridge and freezer. Outdoor wood BBQs available.

**Accommodation** is a mix of lodge and cabins, with camp sites available.

**Cost** is \$30/night per person – based on 10 people in the lodge and 4 people in a cabin.

There are also Wilderness Retreats at \$154.40 per night for 2 people. These include all bedding and look quite luxurious, but members would need to book these themselves.

**Directions:** Cape Conran is approximately 260km by road from Morwell – allow 3 ½ hours travelling time from there. Take the Princes Hwy to Orbost, then head south to Marlo on the coast and then drive east along the coast to Cape Conran. It is a sealed road all the way there.

A program of walks and activities has been arranged and copies are available. Names on list and full payment at August GM please.

## **SEANA SPRING CAMP OCTOBER**

28 October to 1 November at Phillip Island.

This is being organized by FNCV.

The base for activities will be the San Remo Golf Club. Participants will need to book their own accommodation.

Information: [seanacamp@fncv.org.au](mailto:seanacamp@fncv.org.au)

SEANA Camp, C/- FNCV, Locked Bag 3, Blackburn 3130

Phone 03 9877 9860 (Mon-Tues 9.30-4pm)

## **LVFNC SUMMER CAMP FALLS CREEK**

Early Notice

Friday 20 – Monday 23 January 2012 at Schuss Lodge, Parallel Street. It is a well equipped self-catering, spacious lodge with twin or double rooms with en-suites and linen supplied. Cost quoted is \$102 for 3 nights. BYO food and drink. A program of activities will be arranged beforehand.

## **ANN GET-TOGETHER 2012**

Details of the Australian Naturalist Network 2012 Get-Together are available.

**Where:** Canberra

**When:** 13-21 October 2012

Trips will be organized to surrounding nature parks and places of interest as well as visits to relevant national institutions. An added attraction is Floriade which finishes that weekend.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should be addressed to:	Mrs Gill Bremner The Editor LVFNC Inc. PO Box 719 TRARALGON VIC 3844	Phone: 5174 1730  Email: gill@scribex.net
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**Front cover artwork by Beatrice Roberts**  
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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number/email has changed.

Full Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Private) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$50 ☐ Single \$35 ☐ Junior/Student \$25 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

CHEQUE ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Made payable to LVFNC Inc)

*Subscriptions are due on March 1<sup>st</sup> each year. (Half fees apply for those joining after 31<sup>st</sup> August)*

**LATROBE VALLEY NATURALIST**

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PO Box 1205  
Morwell Vic 3840**

**SURFACE  
MAIL**

SEPTEMBER 2011

Issue No. 545



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 23 September      Eleisha Keogh – Freshwater Inflows & the Gipps Lakes  
Excursion: Saturday 24 September      Mt Hedrick & environs. Meet 10am Heyfield Wetlands  
Centre, or 9.15 carpool at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant.  
Bird Group:      Tuesday 4 October: Jack Smith's Lake. For details  
contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)  
Botany Group:      Saturday 1 October: Den of Nargun. Carpool 9am at  
Traralgon Mexican Restaurant. Contact: Wendy Savage  
☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 21 October      Jim Reside – New Holland Mouse  
Excursion: Saturday 22 October      Munro Grassland Reserve (NOTE swapped with Nov  
excursion). Meet 10am Stratford Apex Park (RHS  
immediately after bridge) or carpool 8.45 at Traralgon  
Mexican Restaurant.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK  
Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE  
Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE  
Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 7 OCTOBER 2011**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>



## TRU WETLANDS BIRD SURVEY – AUGUST 2011

On 18<sup>th</sup> August, the birding group carried out its three-monthly survey of the birds in the TRU Wetlands near Morwell. It was a beautiful day, but we had a very small group for the survey, just myself, Mark, John and Denis Nagle who was there to let us in and joined us for the survey.

We started with a Brown Falcon perched on a power line. When we reached the wetlands we found that duck were in good numbers and variety. 20 Hardhead and 6 Blue-billed Duck were the cream at first, with a few Grey Teal, Chestnut Teal and Black Duck. Cormorants were scarce with just one Little Black Cormorant and herons were also scarce with just one White-faced Heron. There were no Spoonbills in evidence. The first Clamorous Reed-warbler have arrived back from their wintering areas and we detected four of them, but only one Golden-headed Cisticola.

The water levels were very high and it was clear that very recently water had been much higher and had covered all the tracks.

Moving on to check the one-time Sea-eagle's nest we found that once again the Wedge-tailed Eagles are using the nest, with excellent views through John's telescope of one Wedge-tail sitting on the nest.

The highlight of the day was spotted in the water the other side of the bridge from the eagle's nest. At first I thought we had a little group of Pink-eared Ducks, but looking more carefully I realised that they were a much rarer sight. We found a flock of 10 Plumed Whistling Ducks. These are very rarely seen in the Gippsland area. As far as we know the only previous sighting was a single bird on Lake Hyland in Mathison Park, Churchill, which I saw and



photographed on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2007.

Until 1950 these duck were rarely seen south of Sydney. Around 1955, in a wet year a population established themselves on the Murray and sightings in Victoria have increased since then, but still mainly in the northern half of the state. It was lovely to see these handsome birds visiting our area.

They were never very close to us, but I did manage a photo, displayed above. A better view of the bird is shown here. This was the one that came to Mathison Park in 2007.



We saw several grebe, but most were in winter plumage making identification difficult, but we definitely saw both



Australasian Grebe and Hoary-headed Grebe. This one in winter plumage we decided at the time was a Hoary-headed, but the photograph reveals it as a winter-plumage Australasian Grebe.

As well as the Brown Falcon and Wedge-tailed Eagle we also saw a Swamp Harrier and at least three Whistling Kites. The kites

were seen in their nest tree (a very distant view through John's telescope) as well as flying over the marshes.

Despite the absence of a lot of water birds, we found a total of 49 different birds, including a Little Wattle-bird and a little flock of Buff-rumped Thornbills.

Ken Harris

## A BIG THANKYOU!

The club's grateful thanks go to Life Members Bon and Ollie Thompson who have been attending to the folding, labelling and mailing of the Naturalist for many years. Also to Ron Carey for capably persuading his PC to keep on printing those pesky address labels!

Estelle and Bruce Adams are now taking over the first task, while your editor will aim to master the arcane art of label production.

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 22.8.2011

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 23 September:** Freshwater Inflows & the Gippsland Lakes – Eleisha Keogh

**Saturday 24 September:** Mt Hedrick & environs. Meet 10am at Heyfield Wetlands Centre or carpool at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant carpark 9.15.

**Friday 21 October:** New Holland Mouse – Jim Reside

**Saturday 22 October:** Munro Grassland Reserve (note – swapped with November excursion to Duck Point). Meet 10am Stratford Apex Park (RHS immediately after Avon River bridge) or carpool from Traralgon Mexican Restaurant 8.45am.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 1 October – Den of Nargun. Carpool 9am at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 4 October – Jack Smith's Lake. For details contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Not available as Treasurer away.

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

Business pending: walkie talkie sets.

Tape recorder – David Stickney to talk to John Poppins about the use of MP3 player and memory sticks as a replacement.

Sound system – investigate a head microphone for speaker.

Bon Thompson's books and reports – Ken Harris will look through *Muelleria* before depositing in library. Cliff Beuglehole plant lists for Victoria will go to library. Offer other reports to members.

LVFNC Web page – need to find access password to make changes to webpage. Plan for Yahoo7 to be demonstrated to members at GM.

Spotlight to be given to the club by TRUenergy – two have been donated, Alix had these at GM.

Spring Camp 9-12 September at Cape Conran – have 16 certain and 7 undecided or not paid yet.

Bruce and Estelle have offered to take over folding and posting of Naturalist from Bon and Ollie. Gill will take over printing mailing labels from Careys. Will thank Thompsons and Careys for their sterling work.

Program planning meeting – Wednesday 14 September at Lorna's.

BM to return to 7.30pm as Phil cannot attend in afternoon. May meet at 2.30pm next winter.

### Conservation Matters

Vicroads Princes Hwy duplication Traralgon to Sale – concern is about removing Forest Redgums. Community meeting re Kilmany section – Jackie can't attend so will ask Bruce and Estelle.

DSE Fire Management planning for 2011-12 – Jackie will send a letter pointing out map does not indicate EVCs and querying areas planned to be burnt, and their ability to manage the quotas.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR OCTOBER

**Jim Reside** worked as a flora and fauna project officer for many years with the state government before establishing the Wildlife Unlimited Consultancy in 1996. He has conducted surveys of the populations of the vulnerable New Holland Mouse in the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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## MICROSCOPE WORKSHOP: FRESHWATER INVERTEBRATES Saturday 28 August 2011

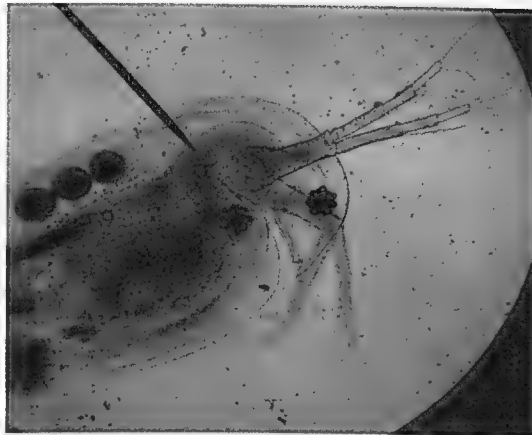
We were privileged to have the use of a science room, including a class set of microscopes and all items of equipment, at Trafalgar High School. We brought samples of water from ponds and pools. Larger water plants, such as Duckweed and Azolla that float on the surface, were in our samples but these were largely ignored in our search for microscopic organisms.



Wendy and Tom

Those with experience in using microscopes, and with some familiarity with the inhabitants of pond water, showed others how to prepare drops of water and view them under the microscopes. Twenty participants were engrossed in searching for signs of life. As we moved from microscope to microscope, we viewed a fascinating variety of small invertebrates, single-celled organisms and freshwater algae. Some of the tiny organisms moved in and out of view as we watched but our patience and persistence was usually richly rewarded.

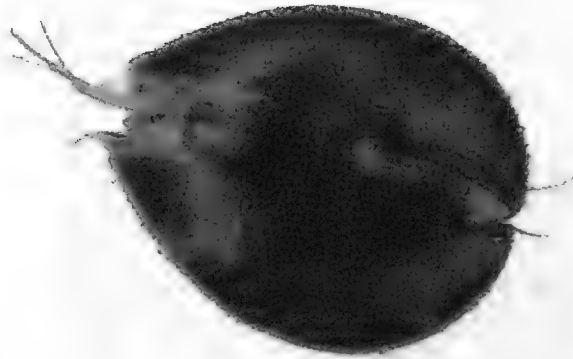
Among the tiny crustaceans the 'Water Fleas' *Daphnia* and *Simocephalis* created great interest. Just visible to the naked eye, these travel through the water with quick jerky movements as they flick their antennae. By trapping a *Daphnia* in water in a wellied slide, and magnifying it 40 times, it was possible to identify the antennae, the eyes, the green-coloured digestive tract (they eat tiny green algae), the beating heart and, in some, several eggs.



Alix demonstrated the effects on the heart rate of adding a little dissolved aspirin then a little dissolved coffee to the water. The aspirin slowed the heart rate and the coffee increased it.



The most numerous crustaceans were the two or three different species of ostracod. Most were green or brown while other smaller ones were almost transparent. All were difficult to catch in a pipette. The body of an ostracod is almost entirely hidden inside the shell which extends down both sides of the body. Viewed from the side the shell is oval or 'bean-shaped'. Viewed from the front the animal appears almost 'heart-shaped'. Only the beating antennae protrude, propelling the animal through the water and gathering food (tiny algae).



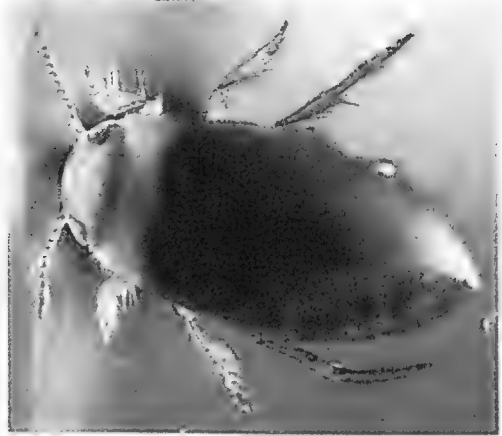
Two individual amphipods were found. These resembled miniature shrimps.



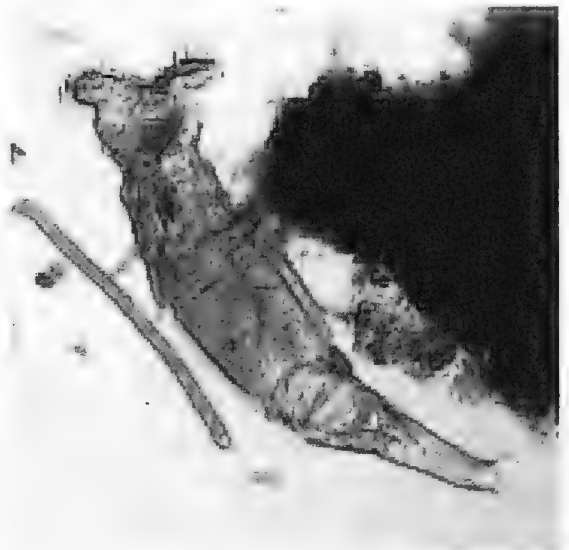
We did not expect to see many Arachnids (spiders and mites). However, magnification of a mite under the dissecting microscope revealed an attractive red and black body and eight pale blue legs.



One insect, a Water Boatman, with hairs on the legs that assist in swimming and gathering food was found in one sample.



Rotifers are tiny invertebrates grouped in a phylum of their own (Rotifera). Those that we observed, magnified 100 times, were yellow-brown, worm-like in appearance and sometimes moved in a 'looping' or leech-like fashion. A ring of tiny hairs (described in the textbook as a 'crown of cilia') surrounded the mouth. The rhythmic beating of these cilia give the appearance of wheel, and this has earned them their name, rotifer, which means 'wheel-bearer'. The beating cilia also appeared to be involved in propelling the animal along with a gliding motion. Rotifers have a 'foot' and can attach themselves to vegetation or other objects. The beating cilia bring a current of water into the mouth and the animal extracts food (tiny organisms) from this.



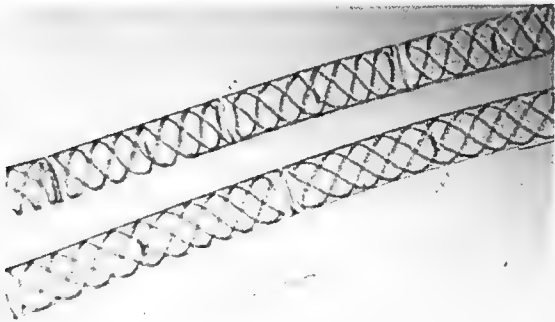
In addition to pieces of decaying vegetation and particles of soil, the droplets of water we viewed contained numerous extremely tiny organisms, green, golden-brown and almost

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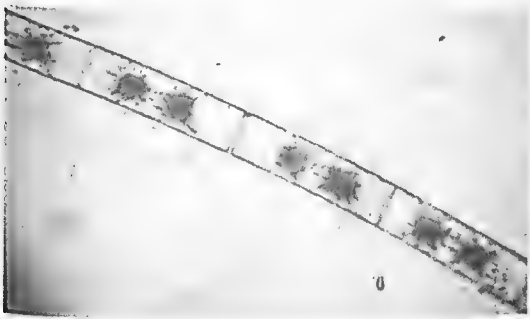
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transparent, too small to be observed in any detail with our equipment. These were largely ignored.

Two species of filamentous green algae were identified. To the naked eye, these looked like fine green hairs. When magnified 100 times their beauty was revealed. They appear as a single row of cells, each containing green chloroplasts of a shape characteristic of that species. *Spirogyra* was identified by the one or two spiral (more accurately, helical)



chloroplasts in each cell and *Zygnema* by the two star-shaped chloroplasts per cell.

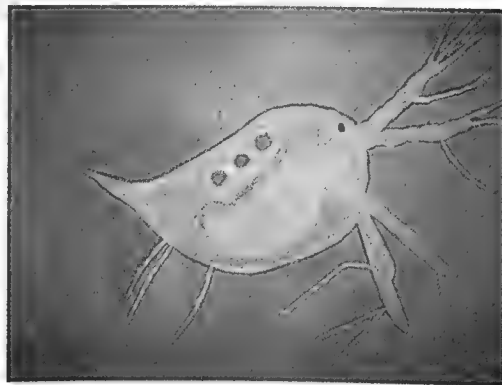


A culture of *Paramecium*, a relatively large single-celled organism had been purchased. These swim by the rhythmic beating tiny hairs (cilia) that cover their bodies and feed by ingesting very tiny organisms. They are able to remove excess water that enters their bodies by gathering water into tiny spherical sacks, contractile vacuoles, and expelling it. Under 100X magnification we could not watch their movements but could not see the cilia.



A few of us experimented with photography, placing a camera at the eyepiece of the microscope. Some of Ken Harris' and mine are included here.

Robyn, a visitor on the day, was inspired to make a colourful painting of *Daphnia*. A black and white version is shown here.



Photographs and information about pond life can be found on websites such as <http://www.micrographia.com>

Margaret Rowe

A note from a happy and appreciative participant – Margaret's thorough preparation, skills and expertise made the morning most enjoyable and informative. Thankyou Margaret!

**REMINDER!**

**DAYLIGHT SAVING STARTS  
2AM SUNDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER**



*The following is one of the October 2010 SEANA Spring Camp at Camp Rumbug reports.*

## WON WRON FOREST

Leader: Ken Smith, assisted by Harley Veitch. Facilitator: Phil Rayment

The group of nine participants met at Yarram and set off north for Won Wron State Forest, which was to prove so rewarding that plans to head also to Mullundung later in the day were dropped.

The first stop on Napier Road was to see *Caladenia catenata* orchids amongst Messmate and Stringybark gums in a non-burnt out area. The orchids ranged from pure white to a variety of pale and deep pinks. The labellum colour also varied from white through yellow to red, some having stripes.

Our second stop demonstrated regrowth after the early 2009 fires. Eucalypts were sprouting with the typical fuzz along the full length of the trunks. Beneath the trees the growth of native plants was remarkable compared to the unburnt section. Sightings included an *Acacia* sp. with yellow-balled flowers and needlelike leaves, *Kennedia prostrata*, *Pimelia humilis*, *Hibbertia riparia*, *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, *Bossiaea cinerea*, *B. prostrata*, masses of *Stackhousia viminea*, *Billardiera scandens*, *Conospermum quadrifida*, *Burchardia umbellata*, Common Violet, *Lomandra longifolia*, a Sun Orchid sp., Honey-pots, *Epacris impressa*, *Tetratheca ciliata*, *Platylobium obtusangulum*, Tall Sun-dew, Twining and Common Hardenbergia, *Dianella revoluta*, *Olearia* sp., *Wahlenbergia* sp., Tall Button Everlasting, *Helichrysum scorpioides*, *Dillwynia cinerascens*, Wattle Mat-rush, *Pomaderris aspera*, *Xanthorrhoea minor* and Chocolate Lily.

Our next stop was along Dog Trap Road, a short distance from Napier Rd. Of interest here were a Spider-orchid, *Caladenia australis*, and *Caladenias* of a wide variety of colours in a profusion of plants. These included *C. clarkiae*. Also a veritable field of *Diuris orientis* in both pure yellow and yellow/reddish-brown forms. Other orchids spotted included a Hare Orchid, a Mosquito

Orchid and a Cobra Greenhood, *Pterostylis grandiflora*.

At Stop 4, near remnants of an old timber railway, Ken drew our attention to Spider-orchids yet to be named.

Lunch was enjoyed at a picnic area named White Womans Waterhole, itself rewarding for plants.

One of the afternoon sites was again notable for the variety of Spider-orchids, including the Thick-lip Spider-orchid, *C. tessellata*. Also of interest were the yellowish and brown forms of Brown-beaks, *Lyperanthus suaveolens*. Sadly, we were a little too late to find Blue-beard Orchids, *Pheladenia deformis*, which had been in flower here a few weeks earlier.

All in all, a fascinating and enjoyable day in Won Wron, thanks to Ken Smith's shared knowledge based on much local fieldwork and to surprisingly amiable weather!

*(Thanks to Peter Strickland for making notes during the excursion.)*

## FOR THE DIARY

### NATIVE FLOWER SHOW

15 – 16 OCTOBER 10am – 4pm

Australian Plants Society - South Gippsland Group annual native flower show, book sale and plant sale at Leongatha Recreation Reserve Exhibition Shed. Adult entry \$3.

Enquiries ☎ 5664 2221

**SEANA SPRING CAMP** 28 Oct – 1 Nov  
based at San Remo Golf Club

Information: [seanacamp@fncv.org.au](mailto:seanacamp@fncv.org.au)

### BIRD CHALLENGE

Saturday December 3. Full details will be available later. There will be no botany group meeting for November as most of the botanists will be wearing their birding hats instead.

### LVFNC SUMMER CAMP FALLS CREEK

Fri 20 - Mon 23 January 2012 at Schuss Lodge, Parallel St. It is a well equipped self-catering, spacious lodge with en-suites and linen supplied. Cost quoted is \$102 for 3 nights. BYO food and drink. A program of activities will be arranged beforehand.



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Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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Morwell Vic 3840**

**SURFACE  
MAIL**

OCTOBER 2011

Issue No. 546



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 21 October

Jim Reside – New Holland Mouse

Excursion: Saturday 22 October

Munro Grassland Reserve (NOTE swapped with Nov excursion). Meet 10am Stratford Apex Park (RHS immediately after bridge) or carpool 8.45 at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant.

Bird Group:

Tuesday 8 November (1<sup>st</sup> is Cup Day): AP Maryvale. Meet by 8.30 AP carpark. Alix requires advance notice of attendance & vehicle rego. Thur 17<sup>th</sup> TRU Wetlands. Contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 5 Nov: Identifying grasses and a short wildflower walk, Jenny Porter's, 1 Muirhead Dr, Mirboo Nth, 10am. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 25 November

Mary Ellis – Post-fire Monitoring at Wilsons Promontory

Excursion: Saturday 26 November

Duck Point. Meet 10am at Yanakie General Store or carpool 8.45 SHARP at Baths Reserve, Mirboo North.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

---

FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

---

FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

---

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

---

FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

---

SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

---

FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

---

HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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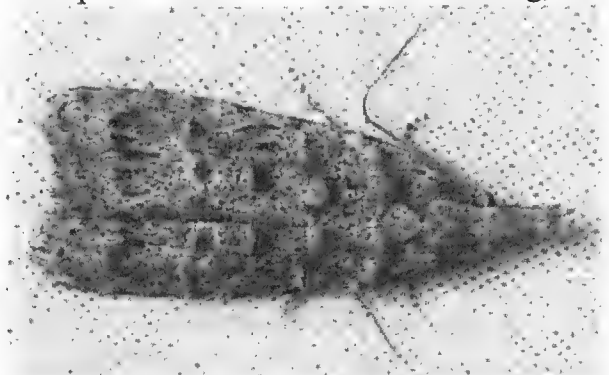
**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (NOV-DEC): 9 NOVEMBER 2011**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

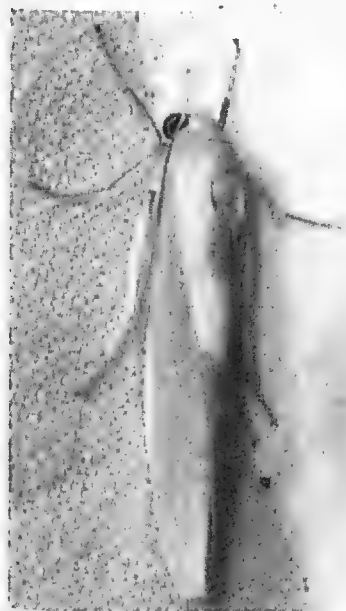
## CAPE CONRAN SPRING CAMP – MOTH TRAPPING

Before going to Cape Conran I obtained permission to set up my moth attracting light and explore the moth fauna of the area. I was optimistic at getting good numbers of moths, but I hadn't bargained for the weather.

The first night the rain eased and I was able to go ahead, but the wind was very strong and kept most of the moths away. We did nevertheless get 11 different species and Alix added to this by bringing a moth she had caught in the toilets down to the sheet. This proved one of the most interesting, but



I have so far failed to identify it. One interesting moth that came to the light was a large Arctiid - *Calamidia*

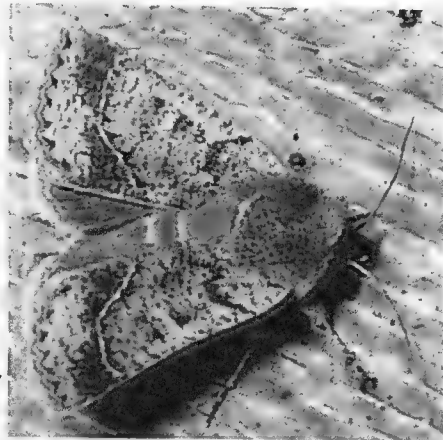


*hirta*, which was new to me. This one furls its wings close to its body giving it a very slender appearance at rest. I also later photographed two other moths that had got trapped in the toilets.

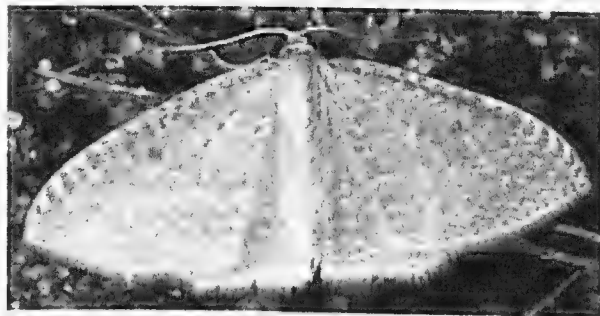
The second night rain and wind made any thought of further mothing pointless. Sunday proved fine in the morning, but more rain came through in the afternoon. I eventually decided to set up, but a little light rain came through just before I fired up the generator. It soon cleared, so I went ahead and the rain

stayed away and gave us a full 3 hour session. It was still windy, but not as bad as the first night. I had chosen a site on the Swamp Track, on the boundary between forest and a moist heath and was much more successful

than the first night with 26 different moths, but little else except for little flies, midges and mosquitos. Many of the moths were

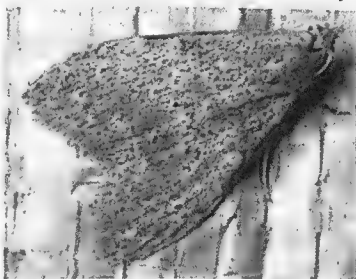


familiar species, but this one, *Pantylidia sparsa* in the Noctuidae, was one I had not met before and we saw several individuals of the lovely little pale green Native



Cranberry Moth (*Poecilasthena pulchraria*).

A rather plain little moth, the Plain Tuft-moth – *Nola pleurosema*, proved interesting as there were no previous records in Victoria, further East than Morwell National Park.



One surprising bystander that last night, was a

Brush Possum, spotted by David Mules on the track. It climbed up a tree close to the light and sat there watching us for the next two hours!

Ken Harris

## PROM PLIGHT

Wilson's Promontory, 22 March 2011, 370mm of rain in less than 24 hours, 500mm in areas above 500m, a one in 300 years event, the Darby River bridge collapse, extensive landslips, Tidal River flooded, trapped tourists, evacuation by helicopter....

Four months on, what did the devastation look like, what restoration had been completed? Ranger Dan Jones invited the Prom'n'aides to see for themselves, so on a balmy day (3 August 2011) a band of 20 rolled up to the entrance. (Although the Prom had been temporarily open at Easter and would be so again in the September holidays, the park south of Darby River is closed to the public.) Dan stressed the value of our volunteer work (monitoring the regrowth of vegetation in designated sites after the 2005 and 2009 bushfires) and regretted that at present we couldn't access any of our areas.

At the temporary office at the entrance we were given a powerpoint presentation of aerial and on the ground photographs of landslips, creeks and rivers breaking their banks, the flood in Tidal River, the extent of silt out to sea and damaged tracks, taken in that week in March and during subsequent survey work. We then proceeded in convoy over the mended bridge, past the road construction crew (the main road is managed by Vic Roads) to Tidal River.

At present the Cotters Lake track is closed because the lake has overflowed down the track to the sea, creating *Cotters Waterfalls*.

During the floods water had poured into Darby River, scouring its bed and changing its entrance to the sea. Instead of the water being slightly saline and hosting freshwater fish, it is now tidal with salt water species.

The reconstruction of the main road was well underway. Granite had been cut through to set the road back from the main landslip and, wherever areas of slippage had scarred the slopes orange, the road slips had been turned a cement-green; this was an aquamulch of sterile corngrass sprayed on, indigenous seeds/seedlings to be put on these sites after consolidation.

Rangers are at present working on the Tongue Point Track and Lilly Pilly Gully. The Oberon carpark track has been cleared of landslides, but there are still a few *hairy* patches to cross. Telegraph Track and Sealers Track are apparently in very bad condition and may take a long time to reconstruct. How far will the \$8.8 million government aid go?

The road in and the car park to Squeaky Beach looked normal until we took the walking

track to the beach. The raging torrents of water took the route of least resistance, the track. This was quickly undercut and swept away, a 100m stretch

becoming a 4m deep gully, the water sweeping around a hill and out to sea, staining the ocean muddy yellow for a distance.

Tidal River was eerie – at first machinery noises, but these shut down at lunch time – no tourists, no gulls and very sleek Crimson Rosellas. The Norman Bay access track ended in a 3m sand cliff.

The river filled the channel from bank to bank and immediately after the floods reefs of rock were revealed in its bed. There were orange landslips on the track south of Whale Rock. Across the only slightly twisted bridge we walked to these slips – miraculously White Elderberry *Sambucus gaudichaudiana* was already colonizing the mud.

After lunch in the dauntingly silent carpark, beset by Crimson Rosellas and Magpies, we ventured to Lilly Pilly Gully where the only orchids for the day were seen, *Pterostylis tunstalii*

The fitter, more adventurous, ploughed along the newly gravelled track past the





earth-moving equipment to see the landslip damage. This slip stretches at least 500m from the top of Mt Bishop to the bottom of the gully – as wide as a 4-laned highway – the continuation of the original track invisible on the other side.

Seeing all the photos that have been circulated and that we looked at in the



earlier presentation just doesn't make the impact that actually standing in the middle of a landslip does. It brought home very forcefully the scale of the task ahead.

Meantime the others browsed among the heathland opposite the Lilly Pilly carpark. Here was a blaze of colour and buds about to burst open in spectacular display: Gorse Bitter-pea, Honeypots, Common Heath, Common, Spike, Pink and Coast Beard-heaths, Sweet and Myrtle Wattle, Prickly Moses, Dusty Miller, Tree Broom-heath, Common Correa, Hop Goodenia. The heaths, wattles and peas will be magnificent in another fortnight, but there will be no-one to admire them. It is interesting to see how well the Prom is recovering from the 2009 fire, but now it will have to cope with the ravages of storm wash and landslips.

Weary, crammed with information, satiated with scenery, we departed the Park. Our thanks go to the ever-helpful and hopeful staff of Parks Victoria at the Prom.

Terri Allen

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 19.9.2011

### General Meetings & Excursions

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**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$3,313.10. Investment A/c \$13,476.66

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

Business pending: walkie talkie sets - David Stickney to continue investigations, look at range and cost.

Tape recorder – David Stickney to talk to John Poppins about the use of MP3 player and memory sticks as a replacement.

LVFNC Web page – John Sunderland outlined Yahoo7 process for members at GM. He will provide instructions for members wishing to join. John Poppins can provide software to find password to our website which will enable us to make changes.

Spotlight - 2 have been given to club by TRU. Have sent thankyou letter.

Bon Thompson's books and reports – have been deposited in club library.

Naturalist label printing – Gill will take this over from Ron Carey by next February.

Spring Camp 9-12 September at Cape Conran – very successful. 26 members attended.

Program planning meeting held 14 September and draft program for 2012 has been prepared.

Community Groups Expo to be held at Old Gipps town on Sunday 9 October 11am – 2.30pm. Opportunity to have stall to advertise club. David Mules and David Stickney may be able to go. There will be other Expos on 20 Nov in Morwell, 4 Mar Churchill, 15 April Traralgon.

Dawson Reserve planned burn – contacted by Sheri Warford DSE Heyfield seeking input. Requested they left burn until after Purple Diuris have flowered and set seed in late November. Concern expressed about recent burns such as Mullundung and Butt Butt conducted at times that are detrimental to orchids. Ken Smith will document specific instances so club can write a letter re our concerns.

## Conservation Matters

DSEWPac has received an application to include *Vulpes vulpes* (Red fox, silver fox) on the live import list, to allow imports for private keeping as pets and potential breeding for commercial sale. Jackie sent letter expressing our serious concerns.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR NOVEMBER

Mary Ellis moved to Fish Creek in 1984 and became a member of the South Gippsland Conservation Society in 1985. She has worked as an administration officer in government departments, a lecturer in biology, a research scientist in a university and a hospital, the owner of a small herb nursery and a consultant to shire councils on roadside and vegetation management plans. Mary spent six years researching and writing her most recent book, *People and Plants A History of Gardening in Victoria*, published in 2003. Her other books are *Virtuous Weeds* (1992), *A Traveller's Guide to South Gippsland Roadsides* (1994) and *Significant Trees of South Gippsland* (2002). Now retired, Mary does voluntary conservation work, at present mostly at Wilson's Promontory, assisting with the fire recovery monitoring.

## BOTANY EXCURSION TO FOREST ROAD, BUNYIP STATE PARK

Jack and Marja led our August botany excursion to Forest Road, which enters the Bunyip SP at Labertouche. This area had been burnt out in the February 2009 bush fires, and is now thickly regenerating. Our first stop on the roadside was by a dense patch of *Viminaria juncea*, which had been a profusion of golden flowers earlier when Jack and Marja had spotted it.

We stopped beneath the power lines where the slashed vegetation promotes a lot of variety in plants. Wattle provided most of the colour with lots of *Acacia genistifolia* and *A. verticillata* and a few bushes of *A. myrtifolia*. Dusty Miller was also widespread and was very pretty with fresh growth. Two flowering peas were *Platylobium montana* (which has recently changed from *P. formosum*) and *Pultanea scabra*. *Goodia lotifolia* was also flowering. Lots of yellow flowers. Young plants of a senecio with lobed hairy grey leaves was later identified as *Senecio glomeratus*.

Further along Jack found a nice spot with new plants for our morning tea stop. This time we had blue flowers with *Dampiera stricta*. The White Marianth *Rhytidosporum procumbens* were much larger plants than usual. A really interesting twisted grassy clump was recognized by Marja as Curly Wig, *Caustis flexuosa*. We puzzled over a small ground hugging creeper until Margaret came up with Creeping Raspwort, *Gonocarpus micranthus*. It was not as raspy as the common *G. tetragyna*.

Lunch was at a very pleasant picnic area. We seemed to have mostly seen *Eucalyptus obliqua* so far, but a large tree here with a blackened trunk was a well disguised Mountain Grey Gum *E. cypellocarpa*.

Travelling north a short distance brought us to a large patch of *Grevillia barklyana*, found only in Labertouche and Jervis Bay. A couple of flowers were found amongst the buds and were much photographed. We were near Lawsons Falls and could hear them in the background. Here also was *Boronia muelleri*, recognized by its pinnate leaf, but not in flower. *Scaevola aemula* grew thickly in the undergrowth up the bank,

and Marja remembered it flowering profusely on their last visit. Gippsland Pinkbells, *Tetradlea stenocarpa* was identified by the leafless flowering upper stems and when viewed with a hand lens, gland-tipped hairs on the buds. A yellow flowering pomaderris with smooth dark green leaves took some identifying. We decided on *Pomaderris seiberiana*, but it has since been identified as *P. elliptica* var. *elliptica*.

Just as we were turning the cars to return I noticed big clumps of grass, a little like pampas grass. Marja called out from her car that it was 'in the book', meaning Wildflowers of Victoria, so while Baiba drove I found it, and it was Giant Mountain Grass, *Dryopoa dives*.

The weather was warm and the park was quiet, despite our concern that we may be bothered by bikes. It really was a lovely day to be out in the bush.

Wendy Savage

## CAPE CONRAN SPRING CAMP

**Friday 9-Monday 12 September 2011**

Our Spring camp was held a month earlier than usual this year so as not to clash with the SEANA camp, but there was no shortage of flowering plants at Cape Conran. As forecast, the weather was cold, windy and often wet, but it was not bad enough to stop our excursions. We stayed in the Parks Victoria buildings in the Cape Conran Coastal Park, a very pleasant setting amongst trees and shrubs, behind a big sand dune with the ocean roaring on the other side. The large windows in the lodge and cabins looked out onto the attractive coastal vegetation. There were 26 participants overall staying 2 or 3 nights.

**Saturday morning** was very windy, but the really heavy showers I'd enjoyed hearing on the iron roof above my bed in the loft had passed and we only had occasional light showers. We drove a short distance to East Cape Beach for a walk along East Cape Boardwalk to Cowrie Bay. There was a lot of variety in the coastal vegetation, but the most interesting discovery was the two tetragonia species growing side by side. The more common Bower Spinach *Tetragonia implexicoma* had much smaller leaves than

the New Zealand Spinach *T. tetragonoides*. Both are natives and the leaves can be eaten as a vegetable. The New Zealand spinach has sessile flowers.

There were heaps of sand hoppers on the beach and Margaret Rowe could tell us they were Crustaceans in the Order Amphipoda and Family Talitridae and are eaten by Hooded Plovers. We also realized that the group of Grey Fantails hopping up and down further up the beach was eating them as well.

When we rounded East Cape the wind was incredibly strong, and an amazing sight met our eyes. It looked as if the sand was alive, foaming and bubbling, but in fact it was sand filled foam blowing off the waves and accumulating on the beach. The waves were breaking on rocks and the wind was so strong it was really churning up the water. Blobs of foam were blowing and rolling along the beach and being deposited in the vegetation on the edge. In fact I'd seen some before we rounded the cape and thought it was an egg mass laid by an insect which was yet to harden.

Leaving the beach to walk through the heathland gave instant shelter from the gale. The most common pea in flower was Common Aotus *Aotus ericoides* and it seemed to be quite variable as we kept trying to identify it as something else. Near the end of the track was a lovely white caladenia, *Caladenia catenata*.

Returning to the carpark, the birdos were scanning the water and spotted some seals. We drove to Salmon Rocks on the way back, but it was so wet and windy we got straight back in the cars and headed back for lunch.

Wendy Savage

**Saturday Afternoon - Lower reaches of the Yeerung River.** We were met by rain and heavy wind when we arrived at the car park near the Yeerung River bridge. Rugged up in wet weather gear and beanies we felt confident enough to leave the car. Most crossed the bridge immediately and went on to the walking track that would lead to the beach. A small group stayed behind in the car park as there were many flowering plants to discover at its fringes.

There were several bushes of *Pultenea retusa*, the Blunt Bush-pea. I had just identified this plant at lunch time from a specimen taken from a tiny shrub the day before. Other peas found were the Rough Bush-pea, *P. scabra* and the Common Aotus, *Aotus ericoides*. One side of the car park was covered in yellow by Coast Wattle, *Acacia longifolia* var *sophorae* while the other side was coloured bright pink from large clumps of Hairy Pink-bells, *Tetratheca pilosa*. The steep embankment opposite the parking area showed a mixture of colours with *Correa reflexa* (red), *Epacris impressa* (pink), *Pimelea linifolia* (white), *Dampiera stricta* (blue) and *Acacia oxycedrus* (yellow).

Wendy and Baiba started identifying Dodder-laurels by looking at the fruits. There are "apples", "pears" and "bananas" I was told. We took a few specimens with us and identified them later in the warmth of the lodge as Slender Dodder-laurel, *Cassytha glabella* (bananas) and Rusty Dodder-laurel, *C. phaeolasia* (hairy pears). *C. glabella* is the only glabrous Dodder-laurel in Victoria.

We crossed the bridge and walked a short distance uphill to look at a Nodding Greenhood, *Pterostylis nutans*. Among the trees were several bushes of Hairpin Banksia, *Banksia spinulosa* and Handsome Flat-pea, *Platylobium formosum* in full flower.

We finally found our way to the walking track to the beach, but only progressed slowly. Too many plants to discover. The track started in wet heathland. On our left hand there was a large area covered with Scrub Sheoak, *Allocasurina paludosa*, Pink Swamp-heath, *Sprengelia incarnata* and Blunt-leaf Heath, *Epacris obtusifolia*. On our right hand there was a beautiful specimen of the Large-leaf Hop-bush, *Dodonea triquetra*. It can be recognised by its none sticky leaves and its capsules with 3 narrow wings. Closer to the path we found beautiful little flowers of the Erect Violet, *Hybanthus vernonii*. There were also large clumps of the Twiggy Guinea-flower, *Hibbertia virgata* and *Leucopogon microphyllus* var *pilibundus*. This *Leucopogon* has leaves folded sharply

backwards along the twiggy stems. We owe the identification of this plant to Jack who worked the Flora of NSW, Jean Galbraith and Willis to get to the bottom of this heath mystery.

The path kept changing its scenery. Past the heathland, we walked among low, flowering Eucalypts, yellow flowering Pomaderris, *P. elliptica* var *elliptica* and Shrubby Velvet-bush, *Lasiopetalum macrophyllum*. We were all struck by a Blue Oliveberry, *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*. The shrub was covered from top to bottom in a large number of shiny berries. After a short distance through a forested area we walked through a wall of Tall Saw-sedge, *Gahnia clarkei* and Scrambling Coral-fern, *Gleichenia microphylla*. A small lookout point provided beautiful views towards the river. Near the bench I found a nice specimen of the Gorse Bitter-pea, *Daviesia ulicifolia* subsp *ulicifolia*. The last stretch of the track went through Teatree scrub, *Melaleuca squarrosa* dotted with the odd Rough Tree-fern, *Cyathea australis* and Blackwood, *Acacia melanoxylon*.

Wind and rain were lashing at us when we arrived at the beach, which made us quickly turn around. Back at the car the weather cleared and I spent a happy hour photographing plants around the car park and along the track.

Marja Bouman

*Sunday and Monday's reports will follow next month.*

## BIRD CHALLENGE

**Saturday December 3.** Details available later from Alix. This will take place instead of botany group meeting for November.

## CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY

**Saturday 10 December** from 12 noon at 'Lapoinya', Yarragon Sth (Tims' residence). Full details November Naturalist.

## SUMMER CAMP FALLS CREEK

Fri 20 - Mon 23 January 2012 at Schuss Lodge, Parallel Street. It is a well equipped self-catering, spacious lodge with en-suites and linen supplied. Cost quoted is \$102 for 3 nights. BYO food and drink. A program of activities will be arranged beforehand.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

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Contributions should be addressed to:	Mrs Gill Bremner The Editor LVFNC Inc. PO Box 719 TRARALGON VIC 3844	Phone: 5174 1730  Email: gill@scribex.net
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NOV-DEC 2011

Issue No. 547



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- Meeting: Friday 25 November Mary Ellis – Post-fire Monitoring at Wilsons Prom  
Excursion: Saturday 26 November Duck Point. Meet 10am at Yanakie General Store or carpool **8.45 SHARP** at Baths Reserve carpark, Mirboo North.  
Bird Group: Saturday 3 December Bird Challenge Count. Contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)  
Botany Group: No botany for November due to Bird Challenge. Next botany day is February 4 – high country daisies from Summer Camp. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246
- 

### CHRISTMAS PARTY 10 DECEMBER, 12NOON, 'LAPOINYA', YARRAGON SOUTH

See page 6 for details.

- Meeting: Friday 13 January Summer Members' Night – Open Theme
- 

FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK  
Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE  
Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE  
Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (JAN-FEB): 3 FEBRUARY 2012**

**LVFNC web page:** <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

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## DEN of NARGUN BOTANY EXCURSION

The 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 botany excursion took us to the Den of Nargun in the Mitchell River National Park. The weather did not look good with rain forecast and only 8 of us set out on the long drive to the Den. We got some heavy rain on the way and ominous clouds shrouded the hills to the North, so it was a pleasant surprise to find it dry when we arrived at the car park.

The Den of Nargun is a fascinating site for its Flora. A pocket of warm temperate rainforest occupies a steep valley on Woolshed Creek, a tributary of the Mitchell River and for many plants this is the western limit of their range in Victoria.

The walk consists of a steep descent from the Car Park to Woolshed Creek. The track then becomes very rocky for the walk to the Den and back. We then followed the creek down towards the river before crossing the creek (the last difficult part of the walk) and then ascending a ridge before descending to the Mitchell River. After recrossing the creek near its mouth, we followed a side track down to the shore of the river, before starting the long climb (by a different route) back up to the carpark.

Every section of this walk produced new and different plants for our delight and the weather was mostly kind to us. I think there was a short sharp shower, but we were under the Lilly Pillies and Kanooka at the time and only noticed it because when we emerged the plants were all very wet. Otherwise there was only a little very light rain as we neared the end of the walk, which of course took us 4 hours, while another party who finished at the same time took only 1 hour for the same walk!

As we started the descent, we found a couple of orchids by the track, the Dainty

Bird-orchid - *Chiloglottis trapeziformis* and the Dwarf Greenhood - *Pterostylis nana* and we also noticed several clumps of a rather attractive lichen growing on the ground as miniature layered bushes. Simone Louwhoff identified it for me as *Heterodea muelleri*.

Very common beside the track was a very prickly heath, which had us baffled at the time. It looked a bit like *Cyathodes* (which is limited to the Prom), but we eventually found a few flowers, which were small tapering white tubes. The flowers did not help us at the time, but afterwards I tracked it down to the Prickly Beard-heath - *Leucopogon juniperinus*. The mouths of the flowers were so small that we did not spot the white beard that distinguishes all the *Leucopogons*.

We soon noticed our first Kurrajong Tree-*Brachychiton populneus*. We saw a lot of these trees on the walk. They are common in cultivation, but in Victoria none grow naturally west of Den of Nargun. They were not in flower, but we saw a lot of the large boat shaped seed-pods, full or irritating sharp fibres surrounding the seeds.

On the descent we saw three different native daisies, all unfamiliar to most of us. All have very small flowers. Two *Vittadinia* species have light blue to white flowers and are known as New Holland Daisies. The two we found were *Vittadinia dissecta* and *Vittadinia tenuissima*. The third daisy had tiny yellow flowers and proved to be the Yellow Burr-daisy - *Calotis lappulacea*, which will have rather prickly little fruiting heads when the flowers are over.

We also saw a lot of plants of a small member of the Lamiaceae, the Cockspur Flower - *Plectranthus parviflorus*, unfortunately not yet showing its spikes of blue flowers.

Another interesting find on the descent was a group of rather furry bracket fungi on an old log, which had several mating pairs of red and black beetles on them and signs that the beetles had been eating the fungi. I have so far failed to identify either fungus or beetles, but the beetles are probably in the family Erotylidae, known as Fungus-eating Beetles.





As we descended we saw more and more of the climbers and lianas that festoon the warm temperate rain-forest. Forest Clematis and Wonga Vine were both very familiar, but less well known were the Jasmine Morinda - *Morinda jasminoides*, Common Milk-vine - *Marsdenia rostrata*, Lawyer Vine - *Smilax australis* and Wombat Berry - *Eustrephus latifolius*.

During the descent, Green Rock Fern - *Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia* was abundant. As we made our way along Woolshed creek there were numerous ferns, two of which we do not see very often, the Fragrant Fern - *Microsorium scandens*, close cousin to the Kangaroo Fern and the Rock Felt-fern - *Pyrrosia rupestris*, growing on rocks and displaying its two very different frond shapes. The barren fronds are almost circular, while the fertile fronds are elongated, almost linear in form.

The vicinity of Woolshed Creek is a pocket of warm temperate rainforest and is dominated by two magnificent trees, the Lilly Pilly - *Acmena smithii* (which were in bud, but also still shedding the last of the previous year's crop of fruit) and the Kanooka or Water Gum - *Tristaniaopsis laurina*. As well as the mature trees, there were numerous seedlings of both species among the rocks in the creek. Another tree was fairly common and I dismissed it as *Pittosporum undulatum*. Ron Carey insisted that it was different and I gradually began to realise that he was right. There was no sign of flowers or fruit at first, but we eventually found one with fruit on it. It seemed then that this was yet another tree as it had trifoliate leaves, whereas most has simple leaves rather like narrow *Pittosporum*

leaves. I found this tree hard to identify, but eventually I noticed that the fruit when crushed had a strong scent much like a *Boronia* and I tried looking in the Rutaceae. I found that the Yellow-wood - *Acronychia oblongifolia*, mostly has simple leaves, but some trees have the trifoliate leaves that we found with the fruit. This is another tree at its western limit in the Den of Nargun.

On the ridge before the Mitchell River we found several trees of the Tree Hakea - *Hakea eriantha* and several plants of the Black-fruit Saw-sedge - *Gahnia melanocarpa*.

On our detour down to the bank of the Mitchell River (which was a mighty torrent after all the rain), we found the Blue Olive-berry - *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* and the Box Micranthemum - *Micranthemum hexandrum*. Then looking across the Mitchell River, the hillside opposite had numerous shrubs of Round-leaf Mintbush - *Prostanthera rotundifolia* in flower making a display of purple patches on the slope.

Then, as we made the final ascent we found two more special plants, the Sandfly Zieria - *Zieria smithii* another plant at its western limit in Victoria and the Forest Phebalium - *Phebalium squamulosum* (pictured here), both in flower beside the track.



Finally reaching the top we found one more interesting plant beside the car park, the least common of the Melaleucas in our area, the Rough-barked Honey-myrtle - *Melaleuca parvistaminea* in flower. *M. parvistaminea* has leaves rather like *M. ericifolia*, but has small pale yellow heads of flowers whereas *M. ericifolia* has white flowers.

It was a very rewarding visit to the Den of Nargun and mostly dry despite the threat of rain (which came good on the way home). In

all I recorded 1 lichen, 1 moss, 2 liverworts, 9 ferns and 100 different flowering plants. The complete list is available to anyone interested.

Ken Harris

## CAPE CONRAN SPRING CAMP

*Continued from last month*

**Sunday morning.** Our destination on Sunday morning was the Yeerung River Gorge which is some distance upstream from the bridge. We paused at the bridge to cope with erosion of the road, but it was also a chance to admire the wildflowers. One to attract attention was the pink *Boronia muellerii*, covered in flowers and appearing two-toned because of different shades inside & outside of the petals. The deeper pink *Tetratheca pilosa* was also looking a picture, and Blue *Dampiera* was here and there also. Driving on, past bushland, we could see Blue Olive-berry with reddish new leaves and also Wedding Bush, *Rhycinocarpus pinifolius*, covered in white flowers, which was abundant over the weekend. Clematis was quite showy too, draping over other plants.

The walk to the gorge was mainly through lightly timbered country with some Messmates and Banksias and there were plenty of wildflowers too. Patches of Handsome Flat-pea, *Platylobium formosum*, had typical egg and bacon colouring. Another similarly coloured was the Gorse Bitter-pea, *Daviesia ulicifolia*, with sharp points on the branchlets. Yet another pea was the Rough Bush-pea, *Pultenea scabra*, identifiable by its indented leaf. Trailing Guinea-flower, *Hibbertia empetrifolia*, had yellow flowers and, true to its name, was scrambling over anything available.

We also found two *Persoonias*, *P. confertiflora*, Cluster-flower Geebung, (with small round fruit), and *P. linearis*, Narrow-leaf Geebung. Another species, Prickly Geebung, *P. juniperina*, had been seen earlier. In one or two places the ground was moister and there was more shelter. In these areas there were some very tall rushes, *Gahnia clarkei*, and also a few ferns.

When we reached the vicinity of the gorge it was even shadier and the river had plenty of water, possibly from heavy rain a few months back. The terrain was basically basalt with a large vertical weathered rockface visible across the gap. Another area, less steep, had

an attractive display of *Acacia verticillata* and *Pomaderris*, both with pale flowers contrasting with the green background. The track down into the gorge was steep and rocky.

Two new plants were found near the gorge. The first was Kanooka, *Tristaniopsis laurina*, a tree with yellow flowers and related to Eucalypts. The second was Slender Westringea, *W. eremicola*, with pale mauve flowers and narrow leaves. There were also two species of *Pomaderris*, one with yellow pannicles, *P. intermedia*, probably, and the other with cream pannicles, possibly *P. ferruginea*. Some of the party were lucky enough to see a Rose Robin coming and going across the bottom of the gorge. Early September appeared to be a very good time to visit Cape Conran as the wildflowers really were a picture.

Ron Carey

**Sunday afternoon - walk through Cape Conran Heathland.** From the accommodation we walked past the small trendy bungalows, with their sail covered BBQs and views from the top of the sand dune. Along the slashed area beneath the power lines we noticed a large variety of small plants.

Once at the Heathland walk we were welcomed by an Educational sign board that explained that the park has 200,000 visitors each year, many of them school groups. The popularity of this sensitive area kept management busy. Other boards briefly noted the importance of numerous factors (like fire, fungi, spring flowers and seed production) to the health of the vegetation and the animals living there. Cape Conran is part of a continuous expanse of bush that includes Croajingalong, Snowy River, Errinundra, Coopracambra, The Alpine NP and many State Parks and reserves. The management of these areas has allowed it to support an increasing number of the threatened Long-nosed Potoroos.

The walking track skirted the lower, moister area which was dominated by *Xanthorrhoea resinifera* Spear Grass-tree, a species with a thick flower stem. I enjoyed finding a variety of colorful flowers dotted amongst many rushes and sedges but noted only a few, the Baeckea (rosy), Patersonia (leafy), Swamp Beard-heath, *Hibbertia* with narrow leaves and Wedding bush.



Many of us enjoyed examining a stationary Jacky lizard in the middle of the track. Occasionally we could see small tunnels made in the very thick undergrowth on both sides of the track. I wondered what type of animal made the diggings. Coloured plastic tape tied on the trees indicated that a cage trap lines were used to monitor the diversity and number of small mammals.

Quite quickly we got to the end of the Heathlands walk so we continued upwards into a Eucalyptus woodland with a few areas of Saw Banksia. The very colorful undergrowth included *Platylobium formosum*, *Dillwynia glaberrima*, *Tetralthea*, *Corea*, *Dampiera*, *Burchardia*, *Baurea*, a tall *Pimelea* and both the creeper and erect *Comesperma*. The wet conditions favored *Gahnia clarkei*, tassel cord rush *Hypolaena fastigiata* and the flat leafed *Gonocarpus*.

Many more species and calls were heard and seen in the woodland than along the wet heathland. They included the brown thorn bill, yellow faced honeyeater, pardalotes and crescent honeyeater.

After a long walk and with the weather getting wetter we were happy to see the familiar powerlines and find our way back to the comfortably warm lodges.

Jenny Porter

**Monday – Cabbage Tree Creek Walk.** The last morning of the Spring Camp, saw our numbers much reduced, but the remaining 12 of us set out to drive home via the reserve at Cabbage Tree Creek.

Cabbage Tree Creek is a very special reserve, protecting the only wild stand of Cabbage-tree Palms in Victoria. It is also a pocket of warm temperate rainforest and has many species rarely seen further west.

The Cabbage-tree Palms – *Livistona australis* are magnificent. Many towering high above us, with their trunks clearly marked with rings that had us speculating if each ring was one year of life. If they are some have been living there for a long time. As well as the giants, there was also lots of seedlings on clear ground. Although the tree trunks are very smooth, the leaf stalks are covered with strong sharp thorns.

The first trees we noticed on reaching the reserve were the Lilly-Pillys – *Acmena smithii*. These trees are an indicator species for warm temperate rainforest and were numerous and

sub-dominant below the palms. They were just coming into flower.

After the trees the next plants that thrived along the creek, were the climbers or lianas. Familiar were the Clematis (both *Clematis aristata* and *Clematis glycinoides*) and Wonga Vine (*Pandorea pandorina*), but there were five other lianas that caught our interest. First we found the Jasmine Morinda (*Morinda jasminoides*), not in flower, but we saw several bright orange berries on some of the vines. Austral Sarsaparilla (*Smilax australis*), also known as Lawyer Vine because it has thorns along the stem which when they get a hold of you won't let go! The Smilax plants were mostly just coming into flower. Less numerous were the Wombat Berry (*Eustrephus latifolius*), the Common Milk-vine (*Marsdenia rostrata*) and the Jungle Grape (*Cissus hypoglauca*) with its palmate leaves with 5 leaflets.

There were many other typical plants of the wetter forests including numerous ferns, although the variety of fern species was less than I expected. The seven fern species we found included both Soft and Hard Tree Ferns, two *Blechnums* (*minus* and *nudum*) and the beautiful delicate Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum aethiopicum*).

It was a very special place for the botanists, but it also proved very special to the bird-watchers. They managed to locate Rose Robins, a Large-billed scrubwren and two very special birds, a Scarlet Honeyeater and most exciting of all the Topknot Pigeon, which in Victoria is limited to patches of rainforest east from Cabbage Tree Creek. It was the first Topknot Pigeon that I had seen.

Ken Harris

## FRESHWATER INFLOWS AND THE GIPPSLAND LAKES

The LVFNC has had a long-standing interest and involvement in the Gippsland Lakes – for instance, Lorna Long represented the club on the Wellington Wetlands Consultative Committee for some years during the 1990s. It was therefore appropriate to welcome Eleisha Keogh as our speaker on 23 September, to present an update on environmental management issues for the system. Eleisha is currently an Environment Water Resources Officer, working with both the East and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authorities and bringing a scientific background to that role.

Eleisha began by noting the sheer complexity of the lakes network from the management



viewpoint, with highly incomplete information available as a basis for scientifically-based decision-making. This is the context for the development of the Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy, currently underway.

This well-structured and informative talk was organised around four sections.

## **Part 1: Freshwater inflows received by the lakes**

The lakes catchment is geographically large, comprising four major river basins, namely the Latrobe, Thomson, Mitchell and Tambo basins. These basins are typically quite differently impacted by high rainfall events. The Gippsland Lakes Flow Linkage Model reflects the complexity of the hydrology in modelling flows in Lakes Wellington, Victoria, King and Reeve. The largest inflows are from the Latrobe, Thomson and Macalister Rivers, followed by the Mitchell River; the Avon, Tambo and Nicholson Rivers are relatively small contributors.

## **Part 2: Ecological roles of freshwater inflows**

Eleisha outlined the lakes' salinity regime; surface levels vary between around 5 g/L (grams per litre) in Lake Wellington, through 15 g/L in Lake King to 30 g/L near the entrance to Bass Strait under normal non-flood conditions. Salt concentrations are higher at depth. This variation influences the organisms and plants found in different parts of the system, which supports a diversity of habitats reflecting the high conservation value of the lakes. The system includes large lagoons and small estuaries and non-permanent water bodies such as Sale Common which afford good bird habitat. Fringing wetlands may be hyper-saline, as around Lake Reeve, variable or freshwater (e.g. Sale Common). In the fringing wetlands, the roles of freshwater inflows vary with their intensities. Wetting flows are important for habitat provision, flushing flows serve to reduce salinity and transport sediment and drying out periods facilitate decomposition processes. In the estuarine river reaches, the annual inflows influence the types and location of biota, while flow pulses drive the location and extent of the salt wedge, and promote fish breeding and migration.

## **Part 3: Changes in inflows over time**

Eleisha explained that surface water diversions vary considerably in extent across the rivers of the system. Most of the extracted water comes from the Latrobe, Thomson and Macalister Rivers – between one-third and two-thirds of their flows are extracted as against discharged

into the lakes. By contrast, little of the Mitchell River water is extracted.

Climate variability of course impacts the inflows to the lakes. The post-1997 annual discharges have been consistently lower than the long-term averages, being down by about 40%. The picture is complicated by the fact that there is not a simple linear relationship between rainfall and discharge volume. However, the annual volumes extracted have been broadly similar across the 1986-1997 and post-1997 periods. Correspondingly, salinity levels have been considerably higher since 1997 by comparison with the earlier period, although still well below marine levels (typically 30-35 g/L).

## **Part 4: Management of inflows**

The worst case climate change scenarios for 2050 take account of a permanent entrance to Bass Strait and see predominant marine salinity levels with intermittent freshwater pulses. A current focus of CMA efforts is to estimate how the projected changes in freshwater inflows – in both volumes and frequency – will impact critical sites such as the fringing wetlands of the Lake Wellington system. One priority area for strategy planning is the lower Latrobe River zone which includes the key wetlands of Sale Common, Heart Morass and Dowd Morass. Infrastructure works such as water diversions will be needed to overcome the insufficiency of water flow volumes for protecting the health of these wetlands. The following environmental entitlements have been set:

Thomson River – 18 GL/yr (gigalitres per year)

Macalister River – 15 GL/yr

Latrobe River – 10 GL/yr

TOTAL: 43 GL/yr.

Current research seeks to determine how the available environmental water can best be utilised. It is intended that the effectiveness of the resulting environmental watering strategies will be reviewed in ten years' time.

Eleisha concluded her talk by outlining another current study focus, the lower Mitchell River zone. Flows into Jones Bay are important for maintaining the health of the sea-grass fish hatching areas. Estimates of the required levels have helped define precautionary water use caps on water diversions from the Mitchell (6 GL/yr), Tambo (1.5 GL/yr) and Nicholson Rivers (nil).

A wide-ranging discussion followed, concluding with David Stickney's vote of thanks to Eleisha for her illuminating presentation, which added to the broad-brush picture of the environmental management challenges facing Gippsland's

coasts given by Duncan Malcolm at last October's SEANA Camp.

Philip Rayment

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 17.10.2011

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 25 November:** Post-fire Monitoring at Wilson's Promontory – Mary Ellis

**Saturday 26 November:** Duck Point. Meet 10am Yanakie General Store. Carpool at Baths Reserve Mirboo North **8.45 SHARP**.

**Botany Group:** No botany for November – Bird Challenge instead. Next botany day February 4, 2012 – High Country Daisies from Summer Camp. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Bird Challenge Count, Saturday 3 Dec. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Club Christmas Party:** Saturday 10 December at Tims', Yarragon South from 12 noon.

**Summer Camp:** Friday 20 to Monday 23 January at Schuss Ski Lodge, Falls Creek.

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1868.20. Investment A/c \$13,476.66

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

Sound system – investigate a better microphone for speaker.

UHF CB radios – David Stickney tested some on Mt Hedrick excursion. John Sunderland has made suggestions about types and specifications and we will also consult John Poppins.

MP3 recorder – a decision was made at the GM for John Poppins to purchase a player, model No Zoom H1 Handy Recorder, cost \$150, plus 2 micro STD cards and 2 card readers. He will bring them to next GM.

Community Groups Expo held at Old Gipps town on Sunday 9 October - David Mules, David Stickney, Ken Smith and Phil set up a stall, but very few people visited (shocking weather). Next ones we could attend are March 4 at Churchill, 15 April at Traralgon. Should produce a digital video presentation for use at these events.

Concern expressed about recent DSE burns conducted at too frequent intervals and at times that are detrimental to the orchids. Ken Smith will document specific instances so Jackie can write a letter re our concerns.

Container deposit legislation – Request for support agreed to, as we have in the past.

EGBOC branch or subgroup – not interested in forming one, but like to remain in touch.

Southern Ash Wildlife Shelter – request to sponsor a koala for \$40. Table at GM.

Program planning update – discussed progress and further contacts to be made.

Purple Diuris count – Dawson Railway Reserve 17 October; 5 attended, numbers of orchids low. Longford Road sites 26 October.

Summer Camp 20-23 January at Falls Creek. Booked Schuss Ski Lodge for 3 nights.

Parks Vic have nominated Friends of Morwell NP for Kookaburra Award.

Plant and bird lists – Ken Smith suggested that lists compiled on excursions be made available to members. Will ask at GM who would be interested, and discuss the logistics at next BM

## CHRISTMAS PARTY SAT 10 DECEMBER

Come from 12 noon, BYO food and drinks, table and chairs. Punch and Christmas cake provided, boiling water and BBQ available.

**Where – Yarragon Sth at Tims' residence.** Heading west from Trafalgar on Princes Hwy, turn LEFT into Sunny Creek Rd, then RIGHT into Roaches Rd, and then (very soon) LEFT into Earls Rd. At the top (past 'Eurabbie') turn LEFT into Yarragon South Rd. 'LAPOINYA' is on LHS just under 1 km from Earls Rd junction.

## SUMMER CAMP AT FALLS CREEK

Friday 20 to Monday 23 January 2012

Schuss Lodge, Parallel Street

**Cost:** \$120 pp/3 nights accommodation

**Catering:** Self catering. Lodge has large kitchen and dining area. Tea, coffee and basic condiments supplied. We will eat out together on Saturday night at a local venue.

**Accommodation:** All rooms have twin beds with en-suites. All bedding supplied, including linen. BYO towels and toiletries.

**Excursions** to be arranged for Saturday, Sunday and Monday morning in nearby alpine area.

**Booking:** Full payment required by Treasurer **BEFORE 23 December** to be included in booking. Latecomers may be accommodated but cannot be guaranteed.

## FROM THE EDITOR

A big thankyou to all helpers and contributors throughout the year. Enjoy a safe and happy Christmas and New Year!

Next Naturalist will be mailed in early Feb.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should be addressed to:	Mrs Gill Bremner The Editor LVFNC Inc. PO Box 719 TRARALGON VIC 3844	Phone: 5174 1730  Email: gill@scribex.net
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Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number/email has changed.

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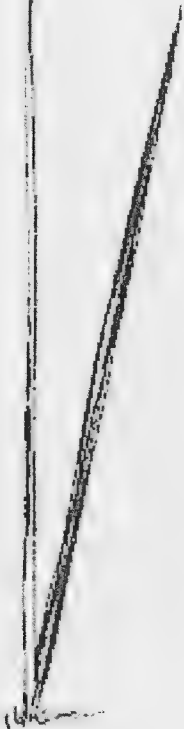
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JAN-FEB 2012

Issue No. 548



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

- Meeting: Friday 24 February                      Greg Gordon – Bats
- Excursion: Saturday 25 February              Birds Around Foster with Rohan Bugg. Meet 10am at Foster Visitors Centre carpark. Carpool 9.15 Mirboo North carpark at Baths Road (toilets).
- Bird Group:    Tuesday 6 March: Hallston Bush (via Mirboo Nth). Meet by 8.30 at Baths Rd carpark, Mirboo North. Contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)
- Botany Group:    Saturday 3 March: Plant survey at Thornell's Reserve, Longwarry North. Meet 10am Picnic Point, Old Princes Highway. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246
- 

- Meeting: Friday 23 March                      **AGM.** Wildlife of South Africa – David Mules, David Stickney & Ken Harris
- Excursion: Saturday 24 March                  Coolart Sanctuary & Homestead by bus. Pickups will be Yinnar 8am, then Churchill, Morwell, Moe etc. More detailed information available at GM.
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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 9 MARCH 2012**

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## IMPERIAL WHITE EGG-LAYING

On 18<sup>th</sup> October, I attended the bimonthly meeting of the Entomology Society of Victoria. It was a members evening and one of the short talks was by Ross Field who is nearing completion of writing a book on the Butterflies of Victoria. The book will be very comprehensive, with photographs of all the stages of just about all the 129 species. Ross told us that he was just 4 or 5 pictures short of complete coverage. He was missing egg photos of 3 or 4 species and the chrysalis of one species. The missing ones are mostly among the least common species, but one important omission was the eggs of the Imperial White (or Imperial Jezebel) *Delias harpalyce*. Ross has them breeding in his garden, but far too high up the Mountain Ash trees!

The next day, just after lunch, I walked across our patio and saw a butterfly fly past. I thought it might have been a Mcleay's Swallowtail, (which would have been very special), so I followed it and quickly found it to be a female Imperial White. I would have moved on, but I noticed that it was circling around a Drooping Mistletoe plant in our *Acacia cardiophylla* tree. The Drooping Mistletoe – *Amyema pendula* is the main food plant for the Imperial White in our area, so I paused to watch its behaviour. It kept landing briefly on one mistletoe leaf after another, and although it seemed to curl its abdomen against each leaf, it was only a second at each and my checking saw no evidence of eggs.

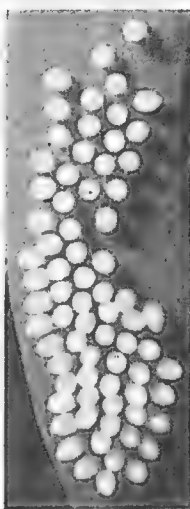
I checked several times over the next half hour and the same behaviour persisted, with no sign of eggs. Then I thought it had gone, because there was no more movement around the mistletoe, but doing a last check for eggs, I rediscovered the butterfly sitting on one leaf near the top of the mistletoe plant. I thought I could see eggs on the leaf, so I went and got binoculars and was able to see that she was indeed laying her eggs in a group on that leaf.

I immediately phoned Peter Marriott, able to say that eggs were being laid as we spoke. He said he would send an immediate email to Ross Field (the only contact details he had) and would give him my phone number.

I then went and got a ladder, feeling I needed to make sure that I was really seeing eggs on the leaf.

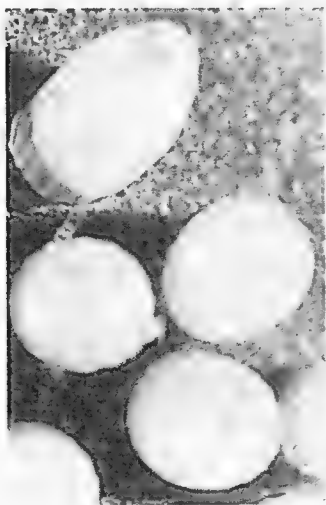


From a somewhat precarious ladder, I was able to confirm that she was indeed laying eggs. As I watched she would curl the tip of her abdomen against the leaf, lay one egg, then draw her abdomen up so that it was concealed between her wings. I think it was about one and a half minutes between the laying of each egg. I then went and got my camera and was able to photograph her from the ladder in the act of depositing an egg on the leaf. The picture shows some of the eggs already laid, on the leaf below the tip of her abdomen.



butterflies.

Returning indoors, the phone rang. Ross had already read Peter's email and was very keen to come and get the eggs to fill one of the few gaps in the book. I was able to tell him that as we spoke, she was still on the leaf laying eggs. Ross couldn't get away (from central Melbourne) until after 4.00, but he was with us soon after 6.00 and the eggs are destined for use in completing the book, though Peter also intends to try and rear them through to



she was busy on that leaf for close to 2 hours. The eggs (at least when fresh) are bright yellow with fine sculpture which is partly visible in the photos. The photo Ross will get taken for him at the museum will show all that fine sculpture in incredible detail.

Ken Harris

## **PRESENTATION BY ROHAN BUGG 23 November 2011**

Rohan took us on a photographic journey of the flora and fauna of Australia, well mostly south Gippsland actually. Rohan obviously delights in capturing our colourful and sometimes elusive birds. I for one was somewhat envious of the Southern Emu-wren and Calamanthus in particular. Many were surprised at a clear picture of an Eastern Whipbird. We all know the patience required to even glimpse them in the thick, dim understory they inhabit. Those who know Rohan however will appreciate the great skill he has in 'whistling up' birds and it sure helps when wanting to capture one like this species on camera.

Rohan demonstrated a keen eye for the quality of light and shade in many shots especially those of birds on calm waters. Another attractive aspect was the inclusion of context, Red-necked Avocets on a surf beach for example.

After a romp through birds it was onto arachnids, flies, grasshoppers, moths, butterflies, reptiles, fungi, flowers and my favourite picture of all I think, a hermit crab, sitting brightly at the entrance of its home,

Between Ross's call and his arrival, I ascended the ladder once more and collected the branch containing the eggs. When I got down I took advantage of the opportunity to get some photographs of the eggs. She had laid 73 eggs in total and if she took about 1.5 minutes per egg,

pillar box red contrasting with glistening crystals of sand.

Thanks Rohan [and sons] for stepping in at very short notice and sharing your passion with us in your own inimitable manner. [Just watch out for those polar bears in a snow storm!]

Julie Parker

## **REPORT ON BIRD CHALLENGE COUNT DAY 2011 IN THE LATROBE VALLEY**

For the 14<sup>th</sup> year in a row Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists' Club members and friends took part in the Australia-wide Bird Challenge Count Day on Saturday, December 3 when the weather was almost perfect for bird watching.

Forty-nine people (the highest number yet), divided into five groups, started out by 8am and finished around 4pm. Each group has some experienced birders who can identify sightings and keen observers to spot and count birds. This year both photographs and recordings of calls were used to assist in identification.

On the initial count of 1998, a small number of people observed 64 different species and 1228 birds.

On the day in 2011, 126 different species of birds and a total of 5089 birds were seen. The number exceeded the previous record of 2009 by 111 birds although the number of species was 11 less than the 2008 record.

The area covered is roughly 40 km from West to East and 20 km North to South across the Latrobe Valley on either side of the Princes Highway. Sites covered, by group, are:

(\* sites monitored since 1998; Traralgon South sites not in 2011)

Group 1: Yarragon South\*, Uralla Nature Reserve Trafalgar\*, Trafalgar Settlement Ponds

Group 2: Mathison Park Churchill\*, Morwell National Park-Kerry's Rd and Billy's Creek\*

Group 3: Traralgon Railway Reservoir Conservation Reserve, Wirilda Environment Park, Tyers North \*

Group 4: Crinigan Road Bush Reserve  
Morwell, IP Hazelwood Brodribb  
Road\* and Morwell River Wetlands

Group 5: Edward Hunter Heritage Bush  
Reserve Moe, Moe Waste Water  
Treatment Works\*, Lake Narracan\*

After last year's decline, the number of Black Swans was well up (3-37), as were Grey Teal (25-232), Pink-eared Duck (0-72), Hardhead (6-102), Australasian Grebe (1-186 nearing the 2002 peak), Hoary-headed Grebe (1-128). Small numbers of rare and unusual species: Freckled Duck, Musk Duck, Blue-billed Duck and Australasian Shoveller were observed. There was a marked decrease in numbers of Pacific Black Duck (131-71) and Chestnut Teal (196-54) and increases in Australian Shelduck (28-30) and Australian Wood Duck (134-187).

The observed numbers of cormorant species all increased from 2010: Little Pied (6-47), Pied (2-4), Little Black (32-94) and Great Cormorant (13-20). Similarly Australasian Darter (3-15) and Australian Pelican (4-18).

Small increases occurred in numbers of White-faced (9-13) Heron and White-necked (1-3) Heron. Whilst of the locally uncommon Nankeen Night Heron, previously only six observed in five years, 16 were spotted. After a two year absence Royal Spoonbill (5); Yellow-billed Spoonbill (2-1) and Eastern Great Egret (8-highest ever) were recorded. Numbers of Australian White Ibis were lower (44-24) but Straw-necked Ibis (0-159) numbers increased significantly.

Seven species of raptors were seen. The numbers of Black-shouldered Kite (0-8), Whistling Kite (0-5) and Australian (Nankeen) Kestrel (0-2) increased markedly with one each of White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Swamp Harrier, Brown Goshawk and an Australian Hobby were seen. The latter is the first recorded on Bird Challenge Count Day. No Peregrine Falcon were recorded again this year.

Purple Swamphen (67) and Dusky Moorhen (27) numbers remained constant with an explosion in the number of Eurasian Coot

(19-1053) over three times the previous record number from 2002.

Of the likely waders only Latham's Snipe (2), Black-fronted Dotterel (8-18) and Masked Lapwing (25-44) were observed. For the first time, in our region, a Marsh Sandpiper was identified.

The numbers of Common Bronzewing (11-5) and Brush Bronzewing (13-3) and Spotted Turtle-Dove (7-5) declined and no Wonga Pigeon were recorded. After two years of no records 3 Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon) were spotted.

Increases occurred in the numbers of Little Corella (11-67) and the uncommon Blue-winged Parrot (2-4). The Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo (18-14), Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (17-20), Australian King-Parrot (8-6), Crimson Rosella (70-78) and Eastern Rosella (49-44) numbers stayed much the same. Rainbow Lorikeet (130-28), Galah (63-33) and Gang-gang Cockatoo (8-1) declined markedly.

No Pallid Cuckoo (3-0) were recorded. Fan-tailed Cuckoo numbers were constant (19-20) as were Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo (3-4). However Shining Bronze-Cuckoo (4-12) numbers rose sharply. No night birds were seen (despite being out nearly all day). Laughing Kookaburra (42-38) numbers were reasonably constant and the number of Sacred Kingfisher (5-8), which were observed nesting at one site, rose. Superb Lyrebird (4-4) and White-throated Treecreeper (32-27) varied little and one of the uncommon Red-browed Treecreeper was recorded. Satin Bowerbird (12-2) numbers were well down.

Numbers of Superb Fairy-wren (109-121), Brown Gerygone (8-18) and Brown Thornbill (61-74, a new high) all increased. Striated Pardalote (63-23), White-browed Scrubwren (38-28) Yellow Thornbill (3-0), Yellow-rumped Thornbill (15-8) decreased, while Spotted Pardalote (14-15) and Striated Thornbill (29-31) varied little. The first recording of Weebill (3) on Count Day was made.

Red Wattlebird (92-112) were dominant in some sites. No Little Wattlebird (6-0) were recorded. Noisy Miner (32-42) numbers

increased. As in the last two years, no Bell Miner were observed.

The numbers of all other Honeyeaters declined: Lewin's (12-9), Yellow-faced (67-32) White-eared (8-6), Yellow-tufted (12-1) White-plumed (6-1), Brown-headed (5-0), White-naped (25-10) New Holland (34-18) and Eastern Spinebill (14-6)

There were marked increases, to the highest number yet, of Eastern Whipbird (14-20), Varied Sittella (0-8) and Crested Shrike-tit (0-9). Increases, to new highs, of Golden Whistler (26-29) and Grey Shrike-thrush (40-51). The number of Rufus Whistler (21-11) declined. As did Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (27-32). Olive-backed Oriole (15-6) numbers declined significantly while Dusky Woodswallow (2-4) numbers increased.

Willie Wagtail (18-20) and Rufous Fantail (3-4) varied little but Satin Flycatcher (16-5) and Magpie-lark (55-45) declined. The number of Grey Fantail (113-131) rose to a new high. Eastern Yellow Robin (52-33) and Jacky Winter (3-0) numbers were down. Scarlet Robin (1-2) and Rose Robin (1-2) were seen.

Grey Butcherbird (16-15) numbers remained high and Australian Magpie (197-200) changed little.

The number of Pied Currawong (33-42) reached an all time high. No Grey Currawong were observed. Australian Raven (25-5) numbers declined whilst a paddock full (carefully counted) of Little Raven (49-191) nearly doubled the previous high.

Eurasian Skylark (1-2) Golden-headed Cisticola (0-3) and Rufous Songlark (0-2) were spotted this year. Australian (Clamorous) Reed-Warbler (19-14) and Little Grassbird (9-2) numbers recorded declined. Silvereye (27-50) numbers nearly doubled to a new high. One Bassian Thrush (0-1), one Mistletoebird (0-1) and one Australasian (Richard's) Pipit (1-1) were observed.

Exactly the same number of Welcome Swallow (117-117) was counted. Fairy Martin (4-6) with Tree Martin (0-7) recorded for the first time in six years.

Smaller numbers of House Sparrow (41-28), Red-browed Finch (6-2) and European Goldfinch (11-8) were seen. Common (European) Greenfinch (0-4) were observed. Common Blackbird (63-36), Common Starling (164-128) and Common Myna (103-54) all decreased.

Thank you to Steve Shinnars from Gippsland Water and Kevin Jones from International Power Hazelwood for enabling entry and assisting at their company's sites. To all involved-well done. Another enjoyable and successful Bird Challenge Count Day.

Alix Williams

## **REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 21.11.2011**

### **General Meetings & Excursions**

**Friday 24 February:** Bats – Greg Gordon

**Saturday 25 February:** Birds Around Foster With Rohan Bugg. Meet 10am Foster Visitor Centre carpark. Carpool 9.15 Mirboo North at Baths Rd carpark (toilets).

**SEANA Autumn Camp at Camperdown 16-19 March.**

**Friday 23 March: AGM.** Wildlife of South Africa – David Mules, David Stickney & Ken Harris.

**Saturday 24 March:** Coolart Sanctuary and Homestead by bus. Pickups from Yinnar at 8am then Churchill, Morwell, Moe etc. More detailed information at GM.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 3 March: Plant survey at Thornell's Reserve, Longwarry North. Meet 10am Picnic Point, Old Princes Hwy. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 6 March: Hallston Bush (via Mirboo North). Meet by 8.30 at Baths Rd Reserve carpark at western end of Mirboo North. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$591.35. Investment A/c \$13,476.66

**Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

Sound system – investigate a better microphone for speaker.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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MP3 recorder is now in use.

UHF CB radios – David Stickney tested some on Mt Hedrick excursion. John Sunderland has made suggestions about types and specifications and we will also consult John Poppins.

LVFNC Web page – password has been found so progress will be made in 2012.

Kookaburra Award nomination – Friends of Morwell NP gained a highly commended – 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> out of 13 entries. Friends of Baw Baw and Mathison Park were joint winners.

Plant and bird lists compiled on excursions to be made available to members – will supply lists on request and email or print out lists for people as required.

Purple Diuris count at Longford Road site 26.10.11 was 8200 plants.

Munro Grasslands – phone call from Susan Taylor about concerns that the area is being trampled with too many visitors. Concern that it was on our program and website. It is also Vicrail land so permission is needed to visit. Only 8 people on our excursion and we have not visited it in recent memory so our impact is not significant, but we will note the concerns.

Friends of Morwell NP annual Butterfly Orchid survey – site locations recorded with GPS for future surveys. Some plants flowering well, some new small plants and some old plants reshooting.

Grand Strzelecki Track – schedule for track building has been prepared and first sod to be turned 25 November. Due to be completed March/April.

## Conservation Matters

Jackie has prepared letters on Planned Burning in Mullundung State Forest, and Proposed Changes to Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (to allow exemptions for logging projects). She will prepare a letter in response to DSE Fire Management Planning letter asking for a 'strategic conversation' in response to club concerns about a lack of EVC details in burning plans.

Butterfly *Trapezites lutea* (Yellow Skipper), protected status, breeding on lomandras on roadside between Traralgon and Morwell. Site needs protecting. Club will inform council for site management – Ken Harris will phone Environmental Officer.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR FEBRUARY

**Greg Gordon** has been rescuing and rehabilitating native animals for years. Greg is an animal technician lecturer at Victoria University's Werribee Campus and also volunteers as regional coordinator of Wildlife Victoria, an organization that provides 24-hour wildlife rescue and information. Bats are one of the wildlife species that Greg has learned a lot about through this work.

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Members' Night Jan 2011 – David Stickney, Great Albatrosses	K Harris	539 March
Report on Bird Challenge Count Day 2010	A Williams	539 March
TRU Wetlands Bird Survey – August 2011	K Harris	545 Sept

### BOTANY

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# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

Mosses at Tarra-Bulga NP

Wilsons Prom – Biddys Track (SEANA Camp October 2010)

Won Wron Forest (SEANA Camp 10/10)

## ENVIRONMENT & ECOSYSTEMS

Anglesea – fire can both destroy and save a heathland

Freshwater Inflows and the Gippsland Lakes

Prom Plight

The Need to Restore Native Vegetation

## EXCURSIONS

Botany Excursion to Forest Road, Bunyip State Park

Cape Conran Spring Camp 9-12 September 2011 – Moth Trapping

Cape Conran Spring Camp 9-12 September 2011 – Saturday am

Cape Conran Spring camp 9-12 September 2011 – Saturday pm

Cape Conran Spring Camp 9-12 September 2011 – Sunday am

Cape Conran Spring Camp 9-12 September 2011 – Sunday pm

Cape Conran Spring Camp 9-12 September 2011 – Monday

Inverloch Excursion 2.4.2011

June Excursion to Gunyah Gunyah Rainforest Reserve

McLoughlins Beach Excursion February 2011

Melbourne Zoo By Train

November Excursion – Moth Trapping in Morwell NP

SEANA Autumn Camp at Anglesea

SEANA Autumn Camp at Anglesea (contd)

Summer Camp at Gelantipy 21-24 Jan – Saturday am

Summer Camp at Gelantipy 21-24 Jan – Saturday pm

Summer Camp at Gelantipy 21-24 Jan – Sunday am

Summer Camp at Gelantipy 21-24 Jan – Sunday pm

Summer Camp at Gelantipy 21-24 Jan – Monday am

Summer Wildflower Walk (FOBB)

Toorong Falls

## FUNGI

Toorong Falls

## GEOLOGY

Inverloch Excursion 2.4.2011

## INVERTEBRATES

Cape Conran Spring Camp – Moth Trapping

Gelantipy Summer Camp – Moth Trapping

Members' Night Jan 2011 – David Mules, Butterflies

Members' Night Jan 2011 – Ken Harris, Mothing in MNP

Microscope Workshop: Freshwater Invertebrates 28.8.11

Not All Flies Fly

November Excursion – Moth Trapping in MNP

## MISCELLANEOUS

Club History Erratum

Grampians Gallivanting

Members' Night Jan 2011 – Phil Rayment, Walking in Nthn Slovenia

Members' Night Jan 2011 - Wendy Savage, Trekking in Peru

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538 Jan-Feb



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number/email has changed.

Full Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Private) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$50 ☐

Single \$35 ☐

Junior/Student \$25 ☐

Naturalist \$20 ☐

**CHEQUE ENCLOSED \$**

(Made payable to LVFNC Inc)

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**Morwell Vic 3840**

MARCH 2012

Issue No. 549



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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## LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 23 March

**AGM.** Wildlife of South Africa – David Mules, David Stickney & Ken Harris

Excursion: Saturday 24 March

Coolart Sanctuary by bus. For pickup times and places see page 6. Entry to park is free. Presentation at 1.30, and entry to mansion are optional extras.

Bird Group:

Tuesday 3 April: Brodribb Rd Wetlands and Mathison Park. Meet by 9.30 EST at Brodribb Rd. Contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 31 March: Pea family identification at Ron Carey's, 332 Normanby Rd, Warragul, at 10am. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 27 April

The Secret Life of the Powerful Owl – Fiona Hogan

Excursion: Saturday 28 April

Evening spotlighting in Morwell NP. Meet for BBQ tea from 6pm at Kerry Rd carpark. Start after dark (7-7.30).

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

---

FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

---

FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

---

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

---

FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

---

FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

---

HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 13 APRIL 2012**

**LVFNC web page:** <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

## LVFNC BIRD SURVEY OF APM MARYVALE WETLANDS

On Tuesday 7th February a large group of bird watchers from LVFNC visited the APM Maryvale Wetlands. The day was mostly fine, although much cooler than usual for February. We got one light shower of rain, but it was rather windy and that affected the bird watching, especially our ability to locate the smaller bush birds.

As we approached the wetlands our first bird was a Swamp Harrier, one of many we saw in the day and they were the commonest raptor, but we did also find Whistling Kites, one Wedgetail Eagle and just as we were departing, an adult White-breasted Sea-eagle flew right overhead.

Darters were quite numerous, and the three commonest cormorants were all present. Great Cormorants and Little Black Cormorant were quite numerous, but it took a while before we found a Little Pied Cormorant.

Duck were numerous and varied, although mainly concentrated in the shallow northern corner of the wetlands. There were a few Black Swans, Black Duck were everywhere, but the best find among the duck was a small group of Pink-eared Duck. We also saw Chestnut Teal, Grey Teal, Australian Shelduck, Wood Duck and Hardhead.

There were several sightings of Australian Little Grebe, including juveniles and a few Hoary-headed Grebe were among the large rafts of duck.

A group of white birds in the distance caused a lot of speculation. They were misidentified by one group as Cattle Egrets and by me as White Ibis. When we finally got close to them they proved to be 7 Royal Spoonbills, 2 Great Egrets and a couple of Little Black Cormorants. At least 2 Yellow-billed Spoonbills were also seen. There were also a few White-faced Herons around and a walk along the river (which I missed out on) found a Nankeen Night Heron, one of the finds of the day.

Another very special bird was also found by the river. An Azure Kingfisher was spotted perched on a dead tree in the river. We all got a good look, before it flew, we then saw



it plunge in the river and my (rather distant) photo shows that it has a small fish in its beak. As it flew back and forth, we spotted a second Azure Kingfisher, and later, when I was sitting by the river, two more flew past me, so there may be at least 4 Azure Kingfishers in that stretch of the river.

Among the smaller birds, the best finds were several possibly juvenile Mistletoe Birds just as we entered the wetlands, and a single Little Grassbird, which I got an excellent view of half way across the causeway.

Altogether some 48 different species of birds were found during the day.

We thank APM for allowing us this opportunity to explore what is an excellent area of bird habitat.

Ken Harris

## FOBB WILDFLOWER WALK AT MT BAW BAW JANUARY 2012

The temperature was a bracing 5°C as about 60 participants arrived at Baw Baw village on Saturday 14 January for the traditional Friends of Baw Baw summer wildflower walk. A pleasant mild, sunny day developed, though, as the mist cleared from the plateau.

Head ranger Andy Gillham welcomed everyone, introducing FOBB President Eileen Laidlaw and other committee members, Parks Victoria staff and excursion leaders botanist John Davies, over from Hobart for the event, and ecologist Dr Greg Hollis. The plan for the day was for a leisurely ramble around the signposted 6 km Village Trail, with some folk extending the walk by taking the Summit Trail extension. Alix Williams led a small group on the Beech Trail for those opting for a gentler alternative.

At the first stop, on the edge of the resort area, John contrasted the vegetation of the open grassy areas, including the abundantly flowering herbs Silver Daisy *Celmisia asteliifolia* and Alpine Podolepis *P. robusta*, with that of the adjacent shrubland with its overstorey of a localised sub-species of Snow Gum *Eucalyptus pauciflora*. He noted the highly acidic peaty soils of the area, with pH levels as low as the 2-3 range. John commented on the affinity of the Baw Baw plateau flora with that of Tasmania, observing that temperatures in the depressions on the plateau fall as low as -15°C. Greg mentioned the disappearance of the Baw Baw Frog in the sub-alpine zone; it is now found in this vicinity only at lower altitudes.

The Village Trail took us gently uphill through Snow Gum woodland, the path bordered by a myriad Grass Trigger Plants in flower, as was to be the case all day. Some of the understorey plants to which John drew our attention included Candle Heath *Richea continentis*, Alpine Orites *O. lancifolia*, Baw Baw Pepper *Tasmannia vickeriana*, Baw Baw Berry *Wittsteinia vacciniacea* growing at the base of a Snow Gum, Dusty Daisy-bush *Olearia phlogopappa* and Broom Heath *Monotoca oreophila*.

Greg explained that Leadbeaters Possum has recently been found in the unburnt Baw Baw Snow Gum forests (as well as in the lower ash forests), living in the low stumps of the eucalypts and safe at these altitudes from predatory owls.

A little further on, in a damp area, we found a Pretty Grass Flag *Libertia pulchella*, in flower. Other sightings near here included Mountain Clubmoss *Lycopodium fastigiatum*, the first of much flowering Alpine Mint-bush *Prostanthera cuneata*, Mountain Plum Pine *Podocarpus lawrencei* and Alpine Baeckea *B. gunniana*.

When we reached an extensive Sphagnum Bog area, we found the damp-tolerant Veined Sun-orchid *Thelymitra cyanea* in bud and the insectivorous Alpine Sundew *Drosera arcturi*. We spotted the small brown Common Froglet, an opportunity for Greg to explain that this species is resilient

to the fungus which has decimated the population of the larger Baw Baw Frog.

Heading on, plant sightings included Alpine Leek Orchid *Prasophyllum tadgellianum* in flower and another Olearia, Alpine Daisy-bush *O. algida*, with its small sessile leaves. The flowers of a thick cluster of Veined Sun-orchids were more open in the by now brighter sunshine.

We enjoyed a leisurely lunch at the edge of Baragwanath Flat, entertained by the antics of a flock of White-eared Honeyeaters. Some of the party then climbed to the summit of Mt Baw Baw, where there is a rather grand stone cairn which was apparently constructed when this point was mistakenly thought to be the highest point on the plateau. Lots of copper-coloured skinks cautiously emerged from gaps between the stones, obviously enjoying the warmth of the afternoon sun.

Descending back to the resort, we thanked Andy and the leaders for a really pleasant day at a site not visited for some years in this annual activity.

Philip Rayment



Some of the group before the walk. Photo P Rayment

## FALLS CREEK SUMMER CAMP 2012 Friday 20<sup>th</sup> – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January

This year our club travelled further afield than usual, to Falls Creek. The last time we had visited these high plains was in 1992 when we were based at Anglers Rest and had driven up from there on day trips.

Our accommodation at the Schuss Ski Lodge was spacious and comfortable, with all amenities and an attractive outlook. Members commented that it may be hard to



go back to more basic accommodation in future. Staying in Falls Creek meant we only had short drives each day for our excursions with so many walking tracks and interesting sites close by. And to top it off we had glorious sunny mild weather, so it really was an excellent summer camp experience. Thirty members and friends attended, making record numbers, I think.

**On Saturday morning** we drove the short distance across the Rocky Valley dam wall to the car park at the start of the Ropers Lookout track, a 5 km return walk. The track runs beside an aqueduct for quite a way before climbing up to the lookout on a basalt knoll. The keen botanists didn't make it to the rise as there were so many alpine plants to identify – a lot of memory jogging was needed. At the start there were masses of Spreading Rope-rush, *Empodisma minus* and the damp areas beside the aqueduct were covered in sphagnum moss. A number of Veined Sun-orchids *Thelymitra cyanea* were found. They were a very pretty blue with darker blue veins.

The overriding flower colour for the weekend was yellow, but most of the yellow flowers were the introduced Cat's-ear, *Hypochoeris radicata*. There were thousands of them everywhere we went. There was also a lot of white yarrow along the path which had probably spread from gardens in the village. Many other yellow flowers were alpine daisies – bracteantha, ozothamnus, craspedia, helichrysum, leptorhynchus and senecio. Sorting out which genus the flowers belonged to was hard enough let alone the species. An evening spent with our botany books made it much easier on Sunday to put names to the daisies.

The two daisy-bushes we saw a lot of were *Olearia frostii*, the Bogong Daisy-bush which had largish flowers on thick long stems varying from pale purple through to white and *Olearia phlogopappa*, the Dusty Daisy-bush which had finer white flowers in bunches. The celmisias or Snow Daisies stood out with their tall large white flowers and silver coated dark green leaves. They have been split into five species, four of which would be in the Falls Creek area and we certainly noticed a variation in the leaf sizes. After much work at our botany group

we decided we had seen three species over the weekend. *Celmisia tomentella*, the Bog Celmisia (often found in sphagnum bogs) had the largest leaves and flowers up to 60 cm high. It was the only Celmisia we saw in flower and was common and widespread. The other two species had flowered earlier and had much smaller narrower leaves. They were *C. costiniana*, the Herbfield Celmisia and *C. pugioniformis*, the Dagger-leaf Celmisia which had even narrower and shorter leaves than *C. costiniana*.

*Kunzea muelleri*, Yellow Kunzea, a prostrate shrub was common and had many lemon coloured flowers. Another prostrate shrub Ken Harris identified was the Tree Violet *Hymenanthera dentata*. It was always found hugging the rocks and invariably had dead tips to its branches looking as if it had a hard life. The 'Flora' notes it as a 'variant warranting taxonomic recognition' – another new species to learn in the future?

There were carpets of a thick-leaved buttercup which we decided was *Ranunculus victoriensis*. *Scaevola hookeri*, the Alpine Fan-flower was very pretty with its purple-blue flowers. The bluebells we found we decided were the Waxy bluebell, *Wahlenbergia ceracea*. Much paler than the Royal bluebell we saw later, and described as common in damp alpine grasslands. The Twin-flowered Knawel *Scleranthus biflorus* stood out as a light green cushion amongst the herbs and grasses, and when you get down to look closely you can see the pairs of tiny flowers standing above the cushion on little stalks. We squibbed out on trying to identify the grasses, but the many poas in flower were really pretty waving in the breeze.

As the rest of the group returned from Ropers Lookout they mocked the botanists who were inching their way along the track, and told us of the glorious views to be had from the top. Maybe I'll get to see that next trip.

Wendy Savage

**On Sunday morning** the group set off from the car park on the Bogong High Plains Road up the gentle climb of the Heathy Spur Track. The sun was bright and the air cool. Those intending to walk to Heathy Spur or

the 9 km to the Watchbed Creek car park strode ahead of those who chose to 'botanise' their way along. The narrow track meandered through open grasslands and patches of low shrubs, brightened by a generous scattering of yellow and white daisies. Views of the Rocky Valley dam below, and the surrounding mountain tops, were broken by the bare silver branches of clumps of Snow Gums. New growth, regeneration from the fire of 2003, billowed one or two metres high from the lignotubers of the gums.

Grasses clothed more than half the expanse of hillside and among the grasses, between scattered clumps of shrubs such as Alpine Bossiaea and Alpine Orites, we found an extremely rich variety of plants. Shrubs and herbs in bloom included bright yellow and gold members of the daisy family: clumps of the Alpine Yam Daisy, Alpine Podolepis, Orange Everlasting, Billy-buttons, Wiry Buttons and scattered plants of Variable Groundsel, Cat's-ear (not as common as at some other sites), and the less conspicuous Silver Groundsel and Mountain Cotula. Victorian Buttercups, Ivy-leaf Goodenia, Yellow Kunzea and the tiny Twin-flowered Knawel added to the yellow theme. The predominantly white members of the daisy family created a spectacular display in places: clumps of Snow Daisies, *Celmisia tomentella*, and shrubs of Bogong Daisy-bush, Dusty Daisy-bush and Cascade Everlasting. The suite of white flowers was supported by the Prickly Starwort, Alpine Mint-bush, Derwent Speedwell, *Pimelea ligustrina*, Alpine Trachymene and Candle Heath, *Richea continentis*. A few mauves and blues were added to the yellow and white theme by Brachyscomes, the Showy Violet, *Viola betonicifolia*, Alpine Fan-flower, Willowherbs, and Waxy Bluebells. Mountain Pepper, Alpine Woodruff, Bidgee-widgee, Australian Carraway, Cranesbill, Forest Phebalium, Tree Violet, Alpine Starbush, and Alpine Hovea, although not in flower, contributed greens, rich red-browns, and silver-greys.

Along the track we met Dr Michael Nash, an ecologist who was returning from a few days' bush camping to study beetles. He leads a team from Melbourne and Latrobe

Universities in a study of the effects of climate change on the alpine area. He commented on the presence of exotic species such as European Wasps and Honey Bees in the area. He explained that the huge numbers of Black Ants, *Iridomyrmex mjobergi*, that swarmed over our shoes whenever we stopped walking, giving us the occasional nip, have a very important role in keeping the alpine soil in good condition. While these are the most common ant in the area, a small brown Argentinian Ant, *Pheidole spl*, the Jack Jumper ant, *Myrmecia pilosula* and a predatory ant, *Amblyopone australis*, also occur. Michael was pleased to accept Ken Harris' invitation to go 'mothing' that evening and Wendy didn't miss the opportunity to take Michael's contact details in the hope of arranging for him to speak to our club at a future meeting.

Our enthusiasm for searching for insects increased. The beetles recorded included a Darkling Beetle and an Orange Stack-hat Beetle. Marlene was fortunate in seeing an Antichinus as she returned to the car park ahead of the group. Birds included the Flame Robin, Richards Pippit, Brown Thornbill, Scrub Wren and, from the Bogong High Plains Road beside the dam, a Pied Cormorant, Great Cormorant, and Masked Lapwing. A stop during the short trip to the Watchbed Creek car park revealed a healthy mat of Mud Pratia, *Pratia surrepens*, flowering in the gutter.

After morning tea, we explored the Watchbed Creek Walk, a rocky vehicle track that provided views of the Rocky Valley dam below us and grassy slopes rising to a horizon lined with bare silver branches of Snow Gums far above us. Among many of the plants seen during our previous walks we noted an abundance of the Scaly Everlasting, *Ozothamnus spl*, shrubs of Alpine Grevillea, *Grevillea australis*, several Mauve Leek-orchids, *Prasophyllum alpestre*, a few Alpine Leek-orchids, *Prasophyllum spacelatum*, and a few plants of Creamy Candles and Coral Heath.

The gutter beside the track provided easy access to plants typical of the spring-fed wetlands and bogs of the area. These included the Carpet Heath, *Pentachondra*

*pumila*, with its tiny white bearded flowers, mosses, rushes and sedges. The mosses included *Sphagnum sp* and *Polytrichum sp* and among several rushes and sedges, Mountain Cord-rush, *Restio australis*, Southern Woodrush, *Luzula modesta*, Broad-leaf Flower-rush, *Carpha nivicola*, and Fen Sedge, *Carex gaudichaudiana*, were identified. Tadpoles were plentiful where there was open water.

Birds spotted in this area included the Brown Falcon and Nankeen Kestrel. A Stonefly created some interest as we gathered at the car park before travelling to the Wallace Hut car park for lunch.

Margaret Rowe

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 20.2.2012

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 23 March: AGM.** Wildlife of South Africa – David Mules, David Stickney & Ken Harris.

**Saturday 24 March:** Coolart Sanctuary and Homestead by bus. Pickups from Yinnar at 8am then Churchill 8.15, Morwell 8.30, Moe 8.50, Yarragon 9.05, Warragul 9.20. \$10 charge would cover costs if 20 participants.

**Friday 27 April:** The Secret Life of the Powerful Owl – Fiona Hogan

**Saturday 28 April:** Evening spotlighting in Morwell NP. Meet 6pm at Kerry Rd picnic area for BBQ tea. Start excursion 7-7.30pm.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 31 March: Pea family identification at Careys', 332 Normanby Rd, Warragul. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 3 April: Brodribb Wetlands & Mathison Park. Meet by 9.30EST at Brodribb Rd. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1218.85. Investment A/c \$13,609.58

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

UHF CB radios – David Stickney has investigated options. Motion: That we purchase 4 for \$370 from Dick Smith and a camera bag for storage. D Stickney/D Mules MP3 recorder – have used it, plays easily on a computer using Windows Media Player.

LVFNC Web page – John Sunderland has obtained password and has made some changes. It now works with Firefox. Wendy has updated programs for 2012. Still need to change email addresses, and on Google still has 2011 written. SEANA is keen to have clubs put their newsletters on their websites. Will see if John is able to do this.

Plant and bird lists compiled on excursions to be made available to members – will supply lists on request and email or print out lists for people as required. Contact Ken Harris or Wendy for plant lists and Alix for bird lists.

Plant survey for a walking track along the Old Callignee Rd for 3km ending at the Callignee Hall was conducted in December and club is to be paid \$500. Not received yet so will follow up with Latrobe City.

Friends of Traralgon South Flora and Fauna Reserve are working with Parks Victoria to develop a picnic area on the Callignee South Rd to entice recreational users into the Park and subsequently help in its conservation. They aim to have some environmental interpretation and have requested input into this from LVFNC. Meeting on 23 February – Ken Harris offered to attend.

Latrobe City is updating and formalising the terms of reference for the following bushland reserve Committees of Management: Crinigan Rd Bushland Reserve, Edward Hunter Heritage Bush Reserve and Ollerton Avenue Bushland Reserve. Club responded to draft, noting that assistance from a Latrobe City executive officer might be advisable given some of the responsibilities of the committees, eg OH&S and securing funding. Lorna will continue on Ollerton Ave and Ken Smith on Crinigan Rd. Ask at GM for a rep for Edward Hunter.

Murray-Darling Basin Plan – request from Environment Victoria to publicise the opportunity to have input into this plan. Club will not input but will table at GM.

AGM planning – positions vacant are: Secretary, Vice Presidents 2&3, and Publicity Officer. Nomination forms at GM.

Digital Photo Frame – David Stickney suggested we purchase one for showing photos at publicity events and at general meetings. Motion: That we purchase a

digital photo frame for around \$200. A Williams/D Mules

## Conservation Matters

Nothing to report

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR APRIL

**Dr Fiona Hogan** is a molecular ecologist whose research interest is in biodiversity conservation. She takes a multi-disciplinary research approach which encompasses ecology, biology, spatial analysis and population genetics to obtain a comprehensive understanding of wildlife behaviour, interactions and systems. The focal species of her research have spanned a broad range of fauna including raptors, small and medium sized mammals, thresher sharks and fauna surveys including biodiversity hotspots locally and in the Philippines and Indonesia. Dr Hogan commenced her current position as lecturer in the School of Applied Sciences and Engineering at Monash University's Gippsland campus at the beginning of 2010.

*The following is a report on one of the talks given at the January Members' Night. More to follow next month.*

## NEW ZEALAND BIRDS

David Stickney was in New Zealand in early December last year combining house painting with some bird watching. The places he visited were Tiritiri Matangi Island, Miranda, Mount Bruce and whale watching in Hauraki Gulf.

New Zealand has just over 300 species of birds which is not many. However what lacks in low numbers it makes up in their uniqueness. Like many islands there is a tendency towards flightless birds and these birds became vulnerable to extinction when predatory mammals are introduced as is the case for New Zealand.

The first bird picture shown was that of a Huia which is now an extinct bird. There have been 45 known bird extinctions in New Zealand and what is more worrying is that nine of those extinctions have occurred since 1900. The Huia appeared on the first New Zealand stamps in 1895 but the Huia became extinct in 1905.

The other interesting aspect of New Zealand is that it was probably the last large landmass to be colonised as recently as less than 1000 years ago by the Polynesians. In those days there were no land mammals (apart from 3 species of bats) on the islands and the niches which would have been occupied by mammals were taken up by birds. When the Polynesians arrived there were 11 species of moa (large flightless birds) which are now extinct.

There have however been some success stories. David showed a picture of a Takahā which is a large flightless swamphen which was thought to be extinct but was rediscovered in 1948 and populations of these birds have been re-established on some of the offshore islands and protective enclosures. New Zealand is now recognised as the world leader in conservation and has been successful in eradicating invasive introduced mammals (rats, rabbits and cats) from many of their offshore islands.

David showed slides of some seabirds. New Zealand is recognised as the most diverse and productive place for breeding pelagic birds. Also shown were some slides of some of the introduced birds and many of their endemic birds which have survived as a result of New Zealand's conservation measures.

## COOLART BUS TRIP SAT 23 MARCH

The bus will start from Yinnar at 8am, then Churchill Pub carpark at 8.15, Morwell opposite the Post Office at 8.30, Moe opposite the Railway Station at 8.50, Yarragon at 9.05 and Warragul at 9.20. Charge will be \$10 per head. Entry to the Sanctuary is free. Tour of the Mansion is an optional extra.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday 23 March is the club's AGM. Positions vacant are Secretary, Vice Presidents 1 & 2, and Publicity Officer.

## MEMBERSHIP SUBS FOR 2012-13

Subscriptions for the new financial year are now due (1 March). There has been no change from last year – full details and form are on the inside back cover.

## DAYLIGHT SAVING ENDS 1 APRIL

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number/email has changed.

Full Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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Family \$50 ☐ Single \$35 ☐ Junior/Student \$25 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

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(Made payable to LVFNC Inc)

*Subscriptions are due on March 1<sup>st</sup> each year. (Half fees apply for those joining after 31<sup>st</sup> August)*

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APRIL 2012

Issue No. 550



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

- Meeting: Friday 27 April Kangaroo Island – Phil Rayment (Scheduled speaker unavailable)
- Excursion: Saturday 28 April **Evening** spotlighting in Morwell NP. Meet for BBQ tea from **6pm** at Kerry Rd picnic area. Start 7-7.30pm
- Bird Group: Tuesday 1 May: Tyers bridge, Seninis Track & Rawson. Meet by 9.30 at Tyers River bridge, on Walhalla Rd 19km north of Moe. Thurs 10 May TRU Wetlands. Contact Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)
- Botany Group: Saturday 5 May: Plant survey - Rokeby flora & fauna reserve at 10am. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246
- 

- Meeting: Friday 25 May Bird Photography, tips and techniques – Chris Tzaros
- Excursion: Saturday 26 May Wirilda Reserve 10am. (Water Factory not open for tours on Saturdays.)
- 

FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK  
Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE  
Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE  
Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 11 MAY 2012**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

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## WILSONS PROMONTORY BIOSCAN

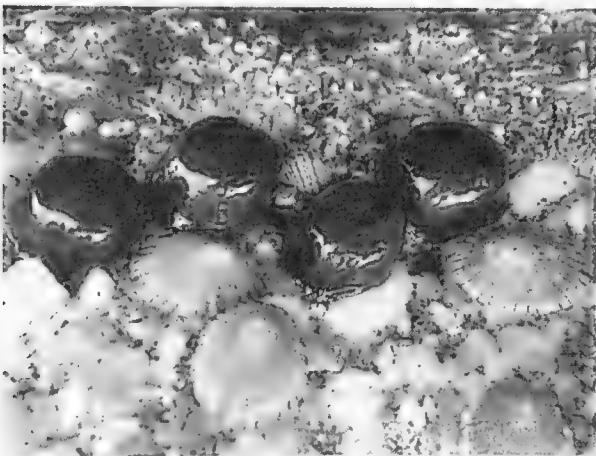
Ken Harris and Margaret Rowe were part of a team organized by Museum Victoria and Parks Victoria to undertake a Bioscan at Wilsons Prom in October 2012.

Terrestrial, freshwater and marine wildlife were to be studied in a two week intensive biodiversity study to assess the impacts of recent extreme weather, namely the fires in 2005 and 2009 and the flood in February 2011, when 370 mm of rain fell in one day.

A Bioscan had already been conducted in Western Victoria and another was scheduled in November in Ned's Corner in the Mallee.

The most remarkable find at the Prom was a crayfish which climbed into the branches of trees.

Margaret Rowe was in a team of five volunteers, part of a group who attend workdays in the Marine Invertebrate section of Museum Victoria, and three or four staff from the Museum looking at the intertidal zone. They walked to Picnic Bay, Millers Landing and Whisky Bay. Field work was conducted in the afternoons at low tide, and mornings and evenings were spent in the lab sorting and listing small animals. A photographer was employed to photograph as much as possible in the field and the lab. A series of photographs taken at Whisky Bay are to be used by Parks Vic rangers in their educational programs.

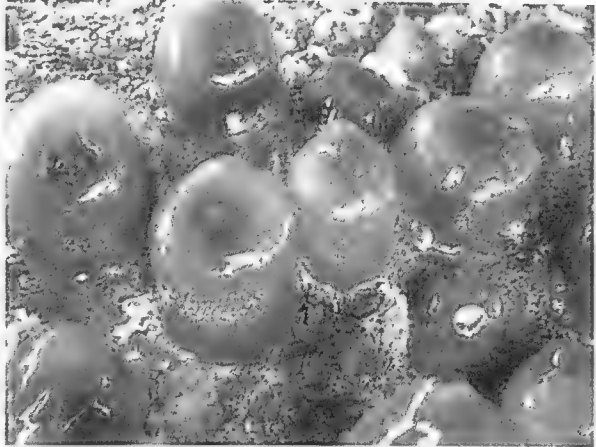


*Vertical Zonation*

*Photo: Margaret Rowe*

The steep granite shorelines along much of the coastline of the Prom offers little shelter to intertidal creatures but, although it doesn't support as many different species as is usual

on flatter, more sheltered and extensive shore platforms, it was amazing to see the wide variety of invertebrates flourishing at the Prom. The animals on the rock faces show a distinct vertical zonation, largely according to the length of time a species can tolerate exposure to the air, sun, wind and rain as the tide recedes.



*Red Waratah*

*Photo: Margaret Rowe*

Margaret showed pictures of many of the species found, referring to some details of their identification and their way of life. Around the rocky headlands of the bays several species of limpet and barnacle clung to the exposed areas of rock at the highest levels. At mid-tide level, thick beds of *Galeolaria* tube-worms sheltered molluscs among their tubes and spectacular clusters of Red Waratah sea anemones hung from protected ledges. In the pools, and under rocks were a variety of sea anemones which were of special interest to one of the scientists. Clumps of *Cunjevoi* stood at low water level. Beds of mussels coated granite headlands which were battered mercilessly by the waves and it was amazing to see tiny black amphipods rushing for shelter deep among the mussels as each wave receded.

At Millers Landing the large areas of mud housed Sentinel Crabs, a range of molluscs and a variety of tiny amphipods. While five species of barnacle were found on the rocky shores, the rocks here were clothed with only one species, a Four-plated Barnacle typical of sheltered muddy coasts.

Ken Harris was part of a group who were taken into Sealers Cove by helicopter. The walking track in had suffered major wash-outs in the floods and will not be repaired

for a good while. Ken spent four nights in a tent, but comfort was supplied at the rangers hut with hot showers and meals cooked by a ranger. All the gear was helicoptered in as well, including Ken's generator and his trolley which proved very useful for transporting all the gear across the creek to the board walk. The group included a herpetologist, mammalogist and fish experts, as well as Ken who was concentrating on finding and identifying moths. Ken spent nights photographing the moths attracted to his lighted sheet, then looking at other things of interest during the day. When the rain set in one night he was able to continue by setting up on the verandah of the rangers hut. He found 23 different lichens on the granite rocks. Ken showed many slides of the moths which were enormously varied.

There were 107 species recorded at Sealers Cove including an Arctiid, only previously found much further east. A Noctuid, *Agrotis ipsilon*, was the first photographed in Victoria and may be a new species for the state. Bogong moths were the most common moths. The Helena Gum moth shown is similar to the Emperor Gum moth but is separated by the position of the 'eye' and is more orange. The face on view showed striped orange and black legs. One beautiful moth Ken had not seen before was the Banksia Moth, *Psalidostetha banksiae*, which was one of the first to visit the sheet.

Ken also photographed and captured a Southern Water Skink whose tip was taken from its tail for DNA testing. He also helped the fish scientists to photograph the fish that they caught, River Black Fish, Spotted Galaxias, Flat-headed Gudgeon and Tupong.

After returning from Sealers Cove the next site was Vereker Track, but the wind prevented satisfactory mothing, so only 9 species were recorded there.

The next day they explored a heath area and found about 6 species of the Geometrid genus *Dichromodes*, which are very much day-flying moths of heathland.

Darby Saddle west was the third site visited. Ken showed photographs of many moths, a male cockroach commonly found under the bark of gum trees, some beetles and a fly

with striped wings. One moth at his sheet, a Geometrid, *Picromorpha pyrrhopa*, was only previously seen in Victoria at Mallacoota.

Ken photographed 150 moth species at the three sites and altogether 400 species were recorded by all the groups.

Our club can be very proud to have two of our members selected to be part of the team conducting the bioscan, and we appreciate the excellent presentation they prepared.

Wendy Savage, with assistance from Margaret Rowe and Ken Harris

*The following is another Summer Members' Night report.*

## GRAMPIANS AFTER THE FLOOD

During October we visited the northern part of the Grampians. The last time we spent time there was in September 2006 when we went to see how it was recovering after the bushfires in that January. Although roads were still being resurfaced and reopened even while we were there, the walking tracks had been cleared and were open. The ground was blackened and the vegetation burnt but everything was recovering and there was a profusion of wildflowers and a magnificent display of flowering grass trees.

This time we went to see the damage done by the tremendous storm and floodwaters earlier in the year. The road between Halls Gap and Dunkeld in the south had been reopened only a couple of weeks before we were there. Three bridges and the road passing over creeks flowing into Lake Bellfield had been damaged and a culvert had to be replaced. The flood of water had actually widened the creek beds.

In a shop in Halls Gap village there were photos of the flood waters. Those of you who have been to Halls Gap will remember that there are shops along the eastern side of the north-south road and other shops curved round above the creek. The photos showed a sea of water raging past and it rose high enough to enter some of the shops. In the picnic area between the shops and the creek the ground level had been lowered and I think some of the trees had gone. New picnic tables had been put there and the

ground surface was covered by tan bark as the grass was mostly gone. A huge effort had obviously been put in to prevent further erosion along the creek with the now bare creek banks being totally lined with rocks. It would have been a huge amount of work as, in places, the banks are quite high and steep. The bridge had been slightly damaged on the east side and the road had been narrowed to create another footbridge.

To the north of the village there didn't look to be any damage at all except along the creek itself, though most of the vegetation was still there. On the Stawell road the Devil's Garden, which was totally the wrong name, was massed with wildflowers and the bush along the Mt Zero road was undamaged though we only went along it as far as the quarry. From the village all roads to the west were still closed though we were told that there was only one land slip between the village and McKenzie Falls where the road had to be rebuilt. All walking tracks both to the east and west remained closed.

The road and walking track into Silverband Falls had been reopened and along that creek the devastation was immense. Even after the fires it was still lined with tall trees and massed with treeferns, smaller ferns and other vegetation, all recovering well. Now it looked as if a bulldozer had been put through it. The bridge across the creek, a sturdy, solid structure was a twisted and broken wreck further downstream, so large stone blocks had been placed across the creek, now a harmless, gentle flow of water. A board of photos had been erected to show the area as it was before the flood and as it was afterwards. There were piles of smashed tree trunks and branches massed along the course of the creek. The falls themselves looked much the same as they had previously and the smaller vegetation such as mosses and ferns were already colonising the area but it will be many years before the trees regrow, and probably not in my lifetime. While we were there, we were talking to a Park Ranger who said that on the hills beyond the Silverband car park the damage was so great that the whole hillside had been washed away and the area was unstable at present.

The damage from the storm ceased about half way down the road south to Dunkeld.

Estelle Adams

### THE WILDLIFE OF SOUTH AFRICA

The March talk was presented by three of our local members – Ken H, David M and David S. The talk gave an overview of one of the largest game reserves in Africa - Kruger National Park. It is located in the north-east corner of South Africa and is close to Zimbabwe to its north and Mozambique to its east. It covers nearly 20,000 sq kilometres and extends 360 kilometres long from north to south and 65 kilometres from east to west. It has more species of mammals than any other national park in Africa and well over 500 species of birds in the park.

Our tour started in Johannesburg and David M began the talk by introducing us to some of the birds and mammals seen on the way to Kruger NP on the so called 'highveld'. These were very different from the wildlife in Kruger itself because the park is in the 'lowveld'. It is at a much lower altitude than the highveld and we had to travel down a long steep escarpment to go to the park. Since our main objective was to experience the maximum diversity of wildlife in Africa, we spent quite a bit of time exploring this area. There were three main habitats in the highveld which were highland grasslands which was the dominant habitat, some wetlands and a small pocket of highland forest where we stayed on our first night at Mount Sheba. We found many endemic birds in these areas which are only found in the highlands west of Kruger and not in the park itself.

David's favourite bird was the Secretary Bird which we had excellent views of in the grasslands. It is a terrestrial bird of prey that hunts by running and walking with long strides. They can fly but infrequently. Many of the birds in the wetlands are not found in Australia but occupy similar niches. The grasslands were well populated with antelopes of various species, perhaps because there are no large predators here, with names that we had not encountered before such as Blesbok, Steenbok, Oribi and Grey Rhebok. We spent two days in the Highveld and the next three days in the Park.

On entering the Park We were confronted with two of their largest herbivores. The first was a herd of African Buffalo which are like large stocky cows that can weigh up to 700kg. If we thought that was large our next encounter was with a massive bull White Rhino which



crossed the road and can weigh more than two tonnes. We also had a number of encounters with African Elephants where the bulls can weigh more than six tonnes. Elephants can be very destructive animals and several methods have been attempted to control their numbers to more sustainable levels.

There were several restrictions on the Park which limited our freedom of access to the Park. We were not allowed to leave our vehicles, the vehicles were not allowed to leave the roads and we were not allowed to drive at night. We were however allowed to walk around the accommodation areas which were fenced off from the rest of the Park. These areas proved to be quite productive for bird watching and many photographs were taken in these enclosed areas.

To explore the park at night the camps organised large trucks with local guides who provided a valuable insight into nocturnal wildlife. These night drives were extremely productive and we were able to see spectacles that we did not see during the daylight. We were able to have some close encounters with Africa's 'Big Five' which were elephants, rhinos, buffaloes, lions and a leopard. We did not see these last two predators during the day.

We focussed on bird watching during the day with our excellent guide Errol de Beer from 'Birding Encounters' who managed to find well over 230 species for us. Many families of birds are not found in Australia such as Hornbills (4 species), Francolins (4 species), Vultures (3 species), Weavers (6 species) and Woodpeckers (4 species). There were many more but it was interesting to speculate why there were so many differences. Australia is very much like Madagascar where we had recently been because both countries have been isolated for much longer so both have evolved their own wildlife diversity whereas South Africa is still geographically connected to Europe and Asia. It therefore shares many of the same families that can be found in both these continents.

Ken concluded his talk with some photographs of the wildlife in Kruger NP. I

believe Kens' favourite encounter was the leopard seen on one of our night drives and mine would have to be the Small-spotted Genet, also seen on the night drive, which ran up a tree dived into a hole but forgetting to take his large bushy tail in and then poked his head out so we could all photograph it. Kruger NP has the greatest diversity of mammals of any other National Park in the world and has to be top of everybody's list to see a wildlife spectacle. I would like to thank Ken and David for their companionship on this most spectacular wildlife experience.

David Stickney

## MAISIE FAWCETT AND EARLY FIELD WORK ON THE BOGONG HIGH PLAINS

Concern over the destructive effects of cattle (and sheep) grazing on Victoria's high country vegetation has long been voiced. As early as 1887, Stirling recorded in the *Victorian Naturalist* the rapid decline in the buttercup *Ranunculus anemoneus* in summit areas. Later, around the middle of last century, as fear of the damaging consequences of erosion on water catchment capacity increased, there was a move towards scientific study of the effects of stock grazing and trampling. Effort focussed on the Bogong High Plains, which nurture the Mitta Mitta and Kiewa river systems, important respectively for the Murray River system and hydro-electricity generation. The terrible fires of 1939, so devastating in themselves, were followed by prolific growth of grasses and hence increased stock levels.

Following the establishment of Victoria's Soil Conservation Board (later Authority), SCB/SCA, in 1940, a survey of parts of eastern Victoria by agriculture professor Samuel Wadham and botany professor John Turner from the University of Melbourne produced clear evidence of soil erosion in catchments. To facilitate on-going investigation, on Professor Turner's recommendation, botany graduate Miss S.G.M. (Maisie) Fawcett, MSc (1912-1988) was seconded from the School of Botany to conduct field work. Maisie began by arranging for the fencing of a large area on the steep eroded slopes of Mt Mesley, to



investigate re-establishment of native vegetation. The fences were designed to exclude rabbits as well as sheep and cattle. It is reported that she gained the friendship and support of local cattlemen as she learnt to ride a horse and joined them on high plains treks. It is of interest that Mr Justice Stretton, heading a Royal Commission appointed in 1945 to investigate the grazing of forests, visited Omeo to interview Maisie.



Following her appointment in 1944 as a research officer in the SCB, Miss Fawcett established a 19 acre exclusion plot on the edge of the Rocky Valley catchment. It included a range of vegetation types such as sphagnum bog, snowgrass tussocks, heath and fire-scarred scrub. For each of the main vegetation types, a plot was marked out within the enclosure and an unfenced control plot was selected on similar terrain outside it. Assisted by friends, Fawcett converted a Rover Scout Hut into a botanical specimen holding house. Professor Turner provided important support from his School of Botany, facilitating the laborious regular summer Levy point surveys.

To better represent the full range of vegetation types, a second study site on the edge of the Pretty Valley catchment was also established.

Her work in the decade 1941-1951 produced a massive ecological report to the SCA, arguing that vegetation degeneration and soil erosion were due to over-grazing, with fire a contributing factor. This work led to the SCA recommending future controls on both stock numbers on, and access times to, the Bogong High Plains.

Later, Maisie Fawcett was appointed to a lectureship in the School of Botany, teaching

systematics and ecology to science, agriculture and forestry students from 1949. Monitoring on the Bogong High Plains continued even after 1960, when Maisie, now Mrs Stella Carr, departed with her husband for Queens University Belfast.

The extensive research, to which she was a major contributor, and which was backed by the then new Australian Academy of Science, convinced the Land Utilization Advisory Council of Victoria that cattle grazing in catchment areas above 4,500 feet, such as the Bogong High Plains, must be curtailed. A key factor was the deterioration and desiccation of the sphagnum bogs, recorded to be on a massive scale by the late 1950's.

Mrs Carr's contributions continued much later; for example, she was commissioned by the new Land Conservation Council in 1977 to report on the vegetation and soils of the Bogong High Plains.

Philip Rayment

(With grateful thanks to Mary Austin for her loan of two reports on which this article was based, its compilation motivated by the interest in Maisie's exclusion plots at the club's recent summer camp.)

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 21.3.2012

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 27 April:** The Secret Life of the Powerful Owl – Fiona Hogan (*Speaker not available so topic will be Kangaroo Island – Phil Rayment*)

**Saturday 28 April:** Evening spotlighting in Morwell NP. Meet 6pm at Kerry Rd picnic area for BBQ tea. Start excursion 7-7.30pm.

**Friday 25 May:** Bird Photography – Tips & Techniques – Chris Tzaros

**Saturday 26 May:** Gippsland Water Factory & Wirilda. Check at GM if enough people interested in Water Factory for tour. (*Tours are not run on Saturdays*)

**Botany Group:** Saturday 5 May: Plant survey at Rokeby flora and fauna reserve. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 1 May: Tyers bridge, Seninis Track and Rawson. Meet by 9.30EST at Tyers bridge. Thurs May 10

TRU Wetlands. Contact: Alix Williams  
☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1322.35. Investment A/c \$13,742.33. David presented audited annual financial statement for AGM. Investment account is currently invested in an ethical account with Bendigo Bank at around 3% interest. This will drop to 1.8%. Motion: That David be authorized to reinvest the money in the Bendigo Bank if an interest rate similar to what we have received is available. K Harris/G Bremner

## **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

Sound system – John Sunderland will bring some of his equipment for us to trial.

UHF CB radios – David Stickney has purchased 4 and a carry bag for \$414.88.

Digital Photo Frame – David S has purchased one for \$197 for showing photos at publicity events. Members will be encouraged to bring photos on USB stick for showing at meetings.

LVFNC Web page – Google has picked up 2012 changes to program. John Sunderland has changed email addresses. SEANA is keen to have clubs put their newsletters on their websites. John is willing to do this.

Calligree plant survey - club is still to be paid \$500. Have rung Sam Fenton, Latrobe City, who has the paperwork, and David will send an invoice.

Picnic area development at Traralgon South Flora and Fauna Reserve - Ken Harris attended meeting. Interpretation boards will show walking tracks and flora and fauna likely to be seen or of particular interest. Club will walk track to advise on material. Will meet 9.30 Wed 28 March at Reserve carpark.

Latrobe City has emailed Management Plan and terms of reference for Crinigan Rd Reserve. Ken Smith has obtained printed copy for this as well as Ollerton Avenue and Edward Hunter.

LCHS meeting room – need to find temporary venue from June or later. Uniting Church Hall, Newborough suitable at \$50. Will look at other options as well.

AGM nominations – have filled in nomination forms. Will add a co-opted

position of Web Manager. No longer need Equipment Officer position.

Crinigan Rd bushland education activity for a Morwell school grade 4/5 – Ken Smith prepared activity sheets which will be modified for future activities. Ken, David Mules, and 3 others ran it. Robert Mrzygloski, member of Crinigan Rd and Edward Hunter committees initiated this and has invited schools in the area to participate. Club members will be asked to assist if available.

Grand Strzelecki track is complete. Friends of Morwell NP will walk to park boundary at next working bee. Official opening Sunday May 6 at midday. Guided walks on both May 5 and 6 including return transport.

SEANA camp at Camperdown March 16-19 – well run with 112 participants, 19 LVFNC members and friends. Focus on geology and volcanic landforms.

## **Conservation Matters**

Ken Smith reported an area in Mullundung has been burnt, which had already been burned frequently.

## **GUEST SPEAKER FOR MAY**

**Chris Tzaros, MSc** is employed with Birdlife Australia where he coordinates a major woodland bird conservation project throughout South Eastern Australia. He is a regular contributor to a number of magazines, etc and presents illustrated talks and seminars to a wide audience. An accomplished bird photographer, Chris's passionate hobby complements his professional career. His talk will introduce some of the bird species that are the subject of his ongoing work, and discuss where our woodland birds are headed at a time of climatic uncertainty.

## **INVITATION – FUNGUS FORAY**

The Friends of Morwell NP have received an invitation to join the FNCV Fungi Group in a Fungus Foray at Mt Worth. Interested members of our club are welcome to join in.

**Where:** Mt Worth – Moonlight Creek Picnic Area

**When:** Sunday 20 May, 10.30am to ~3pm

**Bring:** Lunch

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number/email has changed.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Private) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$50 ☐ Single \$35 ☐ Junior/Student \$25 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

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(Made payable to LVFNC Inc)

*Subscriptions are due on March 1<sup>st</sup> each year. (Half fees apply for those joining after 31<sup>st</sup> August)*

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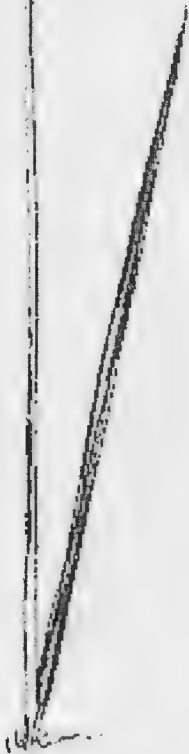
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MAY 2012

Issue No. 551



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 25 May                      Bird Photography, tips and techniques – Chris Tzaros  
Excursion: Saturday 26 May                Wirilda Reserve. Meet at carpark at 10am.  
Bird Group:                                    Tuesday 5 June: Edward Hunter Reserve & Moe Waste  
    Water Treatment Works. Meet by 9.30am Edward Hunter  
    Reserve, 2<sup>nd</sup> carpark on the Coalville Rd, Moe. Contact  
    Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)  
Botany Group:                                Saturday 2 June: Ferns in the field, Glen Nayook at 10am.  
    Contact: Jackie Tims ☎ 5634 2628 (Wendy is away)

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Meeting: Friday 22 June                      Lichens – Simone Louwhoff  
Excursion: Saturday 23 June                Uralla Reserve, Trafalgar in morning and later Lichen  
    Microscope workshop at Trafalgar High School with  
    Simone. Meet at Reserve at 10am.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

---

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK  
Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE  
Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE  
Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 8 JUNE 2012**

**LVFNC web page:** <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

**PLEASE NOTE: SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2012-13 ARE NOW OVERDUE**  
See inside back cover for payment details

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2012

Looking back, 2011 was a relatively quiet year compared with 2010. I say 'relatively' as the previous year was one of the busiest years of our club's history because we celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary by hosting a SEANA camp, producing a booklet on the Club's history and holding a photographic competition.

I said last year that we should now look forward to the next 50 years and our focus should be how we should attract new members. To go some way to achieve this we have embarked on a number of projects with a technological component. Some of our recent initiatives are:

- The purchase of a digital photoframe to display members' natural history photographs at community events to showcase our activities.
- A set of 4 walkie-talkie units has been purchased for better communication and improved safety on excursions.
- To provide improved audio quality and more flexibility for those writing up talks at General Meetings we have replaced the defunct tape recorder with an MP3 player.
- The Club is developing its website to make more information available to both members and others interested.

I'm pleased to announce that a new position of 'Web Master' has been created and John Sunderland has accepted that role. John has already made a valuable contribution by updating our website and will be posting monthly editions of the 'Latrobe Valley Naturalist'. This arrangement will be reciprocated by other SEANA clubs so we can all be more aware of the activities of these clubs.

We hope that these moves will attract some new members to our Club to share in the knowledge and experience that we all enjoy.

As ever we continue to do plant and bird surveys for other groups and corporations in our area. For example we conduct three-monthly bird surveys at TRU wetlands and plant surveys at Callignee and Traralgon South Flora Reserve. We also assist the DSE in conducting owl surveys at certain times of

the year. All these activities demonstrate the high esteem that our club members have in the community.

The general meetings covered a good cross-section of natural history topics including mammals, geology, botany and birds as well as a couple of trip reports from other interesting parts of our planet. These latter were given by members of our Club and provided us an opportunity to see pictures of Madagascar in April 2011 and Kruger NP in South Africa in March this year. Both these destinations were visited by Ken Harris, David Mules and David Stickney in August 2010. We also had two members' nights instead of the usual January meeting to provide more opportunities for Club members to share their natural history experiences. We are grateful to Ken Harris and Rohan Bugg for stepping in at short notice to give their presentations in October and November. We have experienced more talks than usual from our club members this year and are grateful to those who volunteered.

Our excursions led us to many varied locations. We went to Bunurong Cliffs to study the geology, Baw Baw NP, and Munro grasslands to study the plants, Duff Sawmill trail for fungi, Duck Point and Foster to look for birds and Mt Hedrick, Toorong Falls and Gunya Gunya to experience reserves that we don't visit often. In addition a few of us went to Melbourne Zoo in July, and had an interesting day at a microscope workshop in August.

Our two camps also offered contrasting locations. The spring camp had a coastal location at Cape Conran and the summer camp in the Alps at Falls Creek. Both camps were very enjoyable and provided us with the opportunity to explore the plant life, although the weather was not favourable at Cape Conran.

We continue to monitor our attendance records and although our attendance has declined this year to an average of 25 at our general meetings it is still a respectable number. Our excursion attendances were also lower but we did not manage to record numbers at all of them. One of our members' presentations proved to be the

most popular with 35 attending the talk on Madagascar in March 2011.

The contribution of our club members is an indispensable element to the smooth running of the club. We are grateful to all our contributors and our thanks go to those members who have renominated for positions on the committee. We should also recognise the services of Wendy - our secretary whom I'm delighted to say has renominated for this position. This year is something of an anniversary for her because it marks her twentieth year in the job. We offer her our congratulations and look forward to working with her for the next twenty years!

David Stickney

## **BATS – GREG GORDON**

Greg Gordon is an animal technician at Victoria University and is involved in wildlife rehabilitation, so his talk, as well as describing the bats found in Victoria gave information about rescuing and caring for injured bats.

He started by talking about the much maligned Grey-headed Flying-fox, a fruit bat in the suborder megachiroptera. Having extended its range some time ago to include Melbourne, there is now a colony in Bendigo and it is also now in South Australia. Tanya Loos spoke to our club in 2003 about this fruit bat at the time when it was causing a lot of damage to the fern gully in the Botanic Gardens and the efforts to relocate it along the Yarra River. Greg showed us the cages with captive bats and even blow-up decoy bats that were used to attract them whilst driving them from the fern gully with loud noises. The colony has now been moved to Yarra Bend at great expense, but a downside is the mortality of young bats in very hot weather. Gum trees afford less protection than fern gullies. Greg mentioned that the fruit bat may be reclassified as a primitive primate.

The other bats are microbats, in the suborder microchiroptera, and are all insectivorous. Identification pointers are head shape, type of tail and forearm length. Tails can be free, sheathed or fully enclosed in a tail membrane. The age of bats can be determined by counting the bands of cartilage in the joints of the finger bones in

the wing. Three bands indicate a young pre-flight bat. Band number reduces with age with none in a fully grown adult. Bats can be sexed by finding the penis on a male which will 'pop out'. I think you'd have to know what you were doing! Bats use echolocation to catch their prey. This is ultrasonic and in the range 30 – 75 kHz. Humans hear up to 15 kHz. Their diet is a range of flying invertebrates and due to their high metabolic rate they need to eat a lot, consuming up to half their body weight in insects each night. Bats are placental mammals and the young grow very rapidly.

Greg showed pictures of some of the 21 species found in Victoria.

The Little Forest Bat is very common and weighs less than 4 g (less than the weight of a 10 cent piece). The Chocolate Wattled Bat is chocolate brown and has relatively small ears and a large forehead. Gould's Wattled Bat looks similar but is black above and black or brown below. The Yellow-bellied Sheath-tailed-bat is the largest of the microbats (weighs 30 – 60 g). It's rarely collected as it's thought to fly so high and fast. The White-striped Freetail Bat has a grotesque appearance with huge rounded ears and a prominent fat nose (it only comes into far eastern Victoria). The Eastern Horseshoe Bat also looks weird with a horseshoe shaped protuberance below its nose which is used for echolocation as well as its ears. Common Bent-wing Bats roost and hibernate in caves and also use nursery caves to which they return year after year. The Lesser Long-eared Bat has huge ears and is probably the widest ranging bat in Australia. It has adapted well to human presence and this is the bat I have found hibernating in our shed in winter.

Nineteen of the 21 Victorian bats roost in tree hollows, cracks in trees or under bark. Chopping down trees for firewood is a common cause of bat injury. Main reasons bats are brought into care are disturbance at roost and mishaps to dependent young such as being dropped by the female in flight. Injuries can be broken bones and holes in wing membranes. These can be repaired and the wings will regrow to repair holes. Young bats in care are fed Wombaroo milk replacer, which is lactose free. They are fed whilst hanging upside down and will also be

taught to feed on insects before being released as well as being taught to fly (a trial and error process using a soft landing). Being colonial animals bats must always be released in the location where they were found.

Bats should always be handled with gloves as although they are not aggressive, they can carry viruses. Lyssavirus is present in all species of Flying-fox with the highest incidence in the Little Red Flying-fox. It is also found in the Yellow-bellied Sheathtail Bat. Despite this, very few people have been infected, but bat handlers can be vaccinated against it.

Thanks to Greg for his informative talk.

Wendy Savage

*The following is another report from our Summer Camp at Falls Creek in January*

## SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN THE HIGH COUNTRY

At the entrance to the track to Wallace Hut near Falls Creek, a small stone shelter has been erected to protect the sign board and club members clustered in its shade or on the viewing platform to eat lunch. Of interest on the sign board, amongst photos and maps, was a brief history of the area with the information that the work of Maisie Fawcett and those who followed her "showed that grazing did not reduce blazing as the cattlemen had argued, and that grazing was indeed harmful to the fragile alpine ecology" and that Australia's Original Peoples, whose forebears had been dispossessed in the past, are now returning to their traditional tribal lands.

The land sloped away towards the distant hills, with low grasslands and ranks of trees. The bare bleached bones of many Snow Gums were a grim reminder of the fires of 2003 which swept through the area, but here and there a patch of dark green was poking through the expanse of white branches, showing that not every tree was devoured by the flames; and, below the burnt tree skeletons was thick green regrowth, the beginnings of a future forest. Along the track a big patch of *Celmisias* held erect their large white daisy flowers on tall straight stems while further down a multitude of small orange moths fluttered about the

bright yellow flowers of *Senecio pinnatifolius*.



Wallace's Hut

Photo: Philip Rayment

Work is being done on Wallace Hut to maintain it with long poles holding up the tin chimney until it can be strengthened. It is very dark inside where some of the old dusty, sagging furniture still sits atop the floor made of slabs from tree trunks. As the old Snow Gums around the hut were not burnt in 2003 their canopy shaded the area and their thick, multi-stemmed trunks retained their rich colours. Out in the sunshine the Grass Trigger Plants, *Stylidium graminifolium*, were a mass of pink. Some people chose to walk to Cope Hut. Much of that track follows the aqueduct put in for the hydro-electric scheme.

In the plains area opposite the car park for Cope Hut we discovered a patch of brown spikes, the buds of the Bogong or Mountain Gentian, *Gentianella diemensis*, just beginning to open. *Pentachondra pumila* lived up to its common name of Carpet Heath, covering a large area and profuse with both its star-like white flowers and bright red berries. Some of the flowers were still attached to the ends of the fruit, making an attractive contrast. Clumps of Mountain Celery, *Aciphylla glacialis*, a favourite of cattle, was evidence that the area was no longer grazed, and we found more of the Alpine Leek Orchid which we'd seen beside the Mt Nelse track. Near Maisie Fawcett's plot, a katydid and a pyrgomorph were being harassed by the photographers, the dark-colored katydid revealing its blue and red spotted abdomen as it crawled through the grass. The pyrgomorph, a large grasshopper, had pale spots all over its dark brown body. The plot was fenced in 1947 and vegetation both inside and outside the fence was less

than knee height. The posts were grey with age and festooned with foliose lichen. *Podolepis jaceoides*, growing nearby, has longer narrower (lance-shaped) leaves than *Podolepis robusta* and its golden flowers are larger, though both have untidy fringes around the central florets. Out on the road a small black and yellow patterned moth had short white stripes at the end of its wings, while underneath the wings and body were a rich gold and red.

Cope Hut, which is clad with sheets of corrugated iron, is in better condition than Wallace Hut. At each end of the main room in Cope Hut were bunks with a sleeping loft above. A rusty iron heater sat in the fireplace. Rather surprising were the more modern chairs. A lean-to room at the back was filled with branches for firewood, though a sink against the far wall, unattached to any plumbing, showed it was probably meant to be a kitchen. On the north side of the track to the hut the land dropped away to a lush bog area, the beginnings of a stream that flows into Middle Creek, a tributary of Big River which it joins north of Anglers Rest.

Further along the road was the path to Mt Cope (1837m). Much of the walk was a gentle climb until we reached the base of the rocks at the peak. The late afternoon sunshine enriched the colours of the grasses across the valleys and hills that stretched to the west as far as the eye could see. We had seen the small shrub *Asterolasia trymalioides* (Alpine Starbush) elsewhere but the bush near the start of the track was profuse with its bright yellow flowers. Another small shrub, with a liberal decoration of red berries, was the Mountain Beard-heath, *Leucopogon hookeri*. A pleasing discovery was Bogong Eyebright, *Euphrasia eichleri*, as it is listed as vulnerable under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The flowers of this little plant have pale lilac petals with narrow purple stripes and a splash of yellow at the base of the main petal. Beside the track a large grey grasshopper with grey-green patterning on its body had large back legs on which we could clearly see the herring-bone pattern. Once again little orange butterflies flitted around the golden flowers of Alpine

Everlastings. When a couple of moths settled, they weren't orange at all but striped brown and yellow which blended so that they seemed orange when they moved. David S. was able to watch a Flame Robin for some time.

As we climbed higher we could look out in every direction towards the deep blue ranges which faded into ever paler blue as they disappeared in the distance, though in the foreground to the east a mass of white, the remains of the burnt Snow Gums, concealed the hillside. From the top of Mt Cope we could see down into the valley to the north where a line of darker green twisted its way down the slope to an area of bog and pools, and further away still were glimpses of the meandering Cope Creek as it glinted in the sunlight. At the base of the rocks was a lovely garden of wildflowers and short grasses. Adding to their colourful display were clumps of grass with the base a mound of bright green topped by tall pinkish stems holding up the seed heads. After looking at the photos, Bon and Ollie suggested they could be one of the *Festuca* species. On our way down, a number of skinks, olive-brown with a pale gold stripe down their backs and a brick-red stripe each side, were out on the rocks and in the dust on the path, absorbing the last of the day's warmth. During the drive back to Falls Creek a Richard's Pipit flew across the road and Marlene's sharp eyes spied two Kestrels sitting on top of posts.

Estelle Adams

## SEANA GOES TO CAMPERDOWN

The Autumn 2012 SEANA Camp was based at Camperdown over the extended weekend of 16-19 March. The event, ably hosted by the Timboon FNC and attracting about 110 participants, was a great success. The weather was kind, allowing full enjoyment of a range of excursions focussed on the region's volcanic landforms and lakes, with the bonus of a number of wetlands for good birding. Some excursions provided access to sites not normally (or only occasionally) open to the public. An exceptionally convivial atmosphere prevailed at the evening meetings, dinners and talks which were held at the spacious and comfortable Camperdown Golf Club in a delightful



setting beside Lake Gnotuk, located in a simple circular volcanic crater.

## Evening talks

### Friday – Brolgas and Southern Toadlets

Following a welcome to camp by Sue McGuinness, Timboon club president, and Helen Langley, camp coordinator, on Friday evening, two presentations were given.

First up, Stuart McCallum, an Education Officer with Greening Australia, spoke on the subject of Western Victoria's Brolgas. Stuart regularly sees these birds in the Camperdown lakes region. He estimates the population size in central western Victoria to be around 650 birds. Brolgas typically live for 40-70 years. The threats to these birds include habitat loss, power lines, fox predation on chicks and (potentially) the siting of wind farms on flight paths. Climate change manifested in drying out of wetlands makes it easier for foxes to get at Brolga chicks. Stuart noted that there are no local records of Brolga losses to wind turbines, so wind farms may constitute one of the less major threats.

The second talk was given by recent honours graduate Yonie Tiljak, who reported on her study of the conservation biology of the Southern Toadlet. This small ground-dwelling species, of snout-to-vent length 30 mm, walks rather than hops. A female lays up to 200 eggs (a relatively small number for frogs) in a male's burrow, and the tadpoles hatch after rain. Yonie noted the severe population decline since the 1970s. Her research into this issue was based on a survey of seventeen breeding sites, at some of which she detected Chytrid Fungus. Chytrid is a major threat to frogs worldwide; it is spread by direct contact between frogs and tadpoles or by contaminated water.

### Saturday – Geology of Western Victoria

The Saturday evening speaker was Dermot Henry, Manager – Natural Science Collections at Museum Victoria, who gave an excellent geological overview of the Western Victoria Volcanic Province. There are at least 400 eruption points in this region, including Mt Leura which looms over Camperdown township and Mt Schank, near Mount Gambier at the western extreme of the province.

Dermot explained the process whereby magma entrains lower crustal rocks as it rises to the earth's surface, thereby giving us some understanding of the composition of the lower crust. Victoria has some sites of international significance on this score. Eruptive activity commenced about 4.5 million years ago in the Victorian province. A huge volume, perhaps 1300 cubic kilometres (i.e.  $1.3 \times 10^{12} \text{ m}^3$ ), of lava erupted, spreading over about 15000 square kilometres of land area, to an average thickness of around 80 m. Dermot outlined some of the techniques used for the difficult task of estimating the ages of individual volcanic forms. He concluded by describing the different types of volcano found in Victoria. Thus Mt Noorat and Mt Elephant in the Corangamite area are 'scoria cones', the latter being Victoria's largest of this type. Lake Gnotuk, at Camperdown's edge, is a 'maar', a broad, roughly circular, flat-floored volcanic crater with steep inner walls and a low surrounding rim. These form when rising hot magma comes into contact with groundwater contained within sedimentary rocks, superheating it and creating a huge explosion. Mt Leura is a 'nested maar', formed by further volcanic activity within an original maar. The well-known Tower Hill complex is another example of a nested maar.

Philip Rayment

*To be continued next issue.*

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 23.4.2012

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 25 May:** Bird Photography – Tips & Techniques – Chris Tzaros

**Saturday 26 May:** Wirilda Reserve. Meet 10am at carpark and picnic area. (*Water Factory tours not available at weekends*)

**Friday 22 June:** Lichens – Simone Louwhoff

**Saturday 23 June:** Uralla Reserve and Lichen Microscope workshop at Trafalgar High School with Simone. Meet Uralla Reserve 10am.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 2 June: Ferns in the field at Glen Nayook at 10am. Contact: Jackie Tims ☎ 5634 2628 (Wendy is away).

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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**Bird Group:** Tuesday 5 June: Edward Hunter Reserve, then later to Moe Wastewater Treatment Works. Meet by 9.30 at EH Reserve, 2<sup>nd</sup> carpark on the Coalville Rd, Moe. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Club A/c \$1173.17. Investment A/c \$13,742.35.

## **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

Sound system – John Sunderland trialled a fixed microphone on stand at the GM. Good sound, but restrictive for speaker. David Stickney will investigate prices for headpiece microphone at Jaycar. Phil will contact supplier of present unit for advice.

LVFNC Web page – John Sunderland has put Naturalist on website and has suggested other additions. David Stickney will discuss future options of Yahoo site versus further development of existing website.

Callignee plant survey - David M will check if we have been paid \$500 and follow up.

Picnic area development at Traralgon South Flora and Fauna Reserve – five club members walked 5 km of track to look at plants to highlight for signage. Ken Harris has list and will work with committee on sign development.

LCHS meeting room – can now use room until September. Migrant Resource Centre available for \$30 and LCHS in Morwell has room for \$44, same as currently, but extra \$11 for use of kitchen. Will inspect facilities and report back at next meeting.

Grand Strzelecki Track opening and activities May 5 and 6. Guided walks on both days including return transport.

Change of investment at Bendigo Bank – Motion: That we close our ethical investment account, putting \$12,000 in a term deposit at 5.45% for 6 months with interest to be credited to that account. We will change our club account to a Community Sector Cash Management Account paying approx 2.8% interest. David Mules/Jackie Tims. Passed unanimously.

Heart Morass excursion Sat 8 September organized by WGCMA. Our club invited. Plan to put this excursion and related talk on program for 2013.

Thornells Reserve Botany excursion March 3 – have provided plant list for Friends group and preparing report of excursion for their newsletter.

The FNCV Fungi Group are foraging at Mt Worth May 20, 10.30am.

TRRCR will have a new front entrance sign. Graphic designer Sharon Harrup requested high resolution version of our logo.

Club details for 2012 checked and updated.

Equipment register to be prepared. List item, model & serial numbers, location, initial price and date purchased. David Mules to start list from accounts.

Tom Simpson's bush – BOCA group bird surveys have not been done recently so David M will set a date and let members know.

Radio channels – Alix checked with SES and we can use any channel we like.

Moths of Victoria publications – Ken Harris will be producing the volume on the Lacewings.

## **Conservation Matters**

Hancocks Victoria Plantations Forest Management Certification audit 3 days of site visits 22-25 May.

## **GUEST SPEAKER FOR JUNE**

**Simone Louwhoff** has studied lichens for 20 years and was employed in that field for some years, both in Australia and the UK. She currently works part time in the Faculty of Science at Monash University, Gippsland and maintains her interest in lichens through leading field trips and workshops and carrying out lichen surveys with members of field naturalist groups. Simone's talk will cover the diversity and ecology of lichens, focussing on the more commonly found groups in Australia and what distinguishes them. She will lead a field trip to Uralla Reserve, Trafalgar on Saturday morning, followed by a microscope workshop in the afternoon, both aimed at learning basic lichen identification skills.

## **FOR THE DIARY**

SEANA Spring Camp in Bendigo area. 17-20 August 2012, hosted by Bendigo FNC. More information available soon.

**2012-13 SUBS ARE NOW OVERDUE!**



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, and should not exceed 1,000 words.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should be addressed to:	Mrs Gill Bremner The Editor LVFNC Inc. PO Box 719 TRARALGON VIC 3844	Phone: 5174 1730  Email: gill@scribex.net
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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number/email has changed.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Private) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$50 ☐ Single \$35 ☐ Junior/Student \$25 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

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**LATROBE VALLEY NATURALIST**

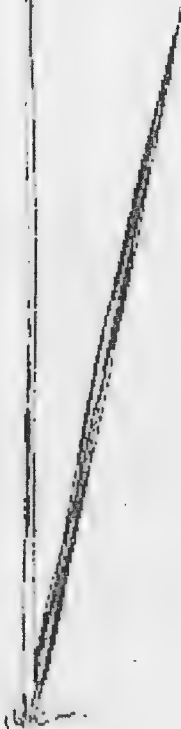
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JUNE 2012

Issue No. 552



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 22 June

Lichens – Simone Louwhoff

Excursion: Saturday 23 June

Uralla Reserve, Trafalgar in morning and later Lichen Microscope workshop at Trafalgar High School with Simone. Meet at Reserve at 10am.

Bird Group:

Tuesday 3 July: Lyrebird Walk and Baths Rd, Mirboo North. Meet by 9.30 at Lyrebird Walk Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 30 June: Eucalypts at Jack and Marja's, 129 Briggs Rd, Nilma North at 10am. Contact: Jackie Tims ☎ 5634 2628 (Wendy is away)

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Meeting: Friday 27 July

Winter Members' Night – open theme

Excursion: Saturday 28 July

Crinigan Rd Reserve, Morwell – meet 10am.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 13 JULY 2012**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

**PLEASE NOTE: SUBS FOR 2012-13 ARE NOW OVERDUE & MEMBERSHIP WILL BE CANCELLED IF NOT PAID** See inside back cover for payment details

## SEANA GOES TO CAMPERDOWN

*(Continued from last issue)*

### Evening Talks (continued)

#### Sunday – Corangamite Water Skink and other reptile fauna

Garry Peterson, South-Western Victoria Regional Threatened Species Officer at DSE, gave Sunday evening's presentation. The first part related to the Corangamite Water Skink Recovery Program. This skink species was discovered in 1963 near Lismore, which is about 40 km north-east of Camperdown. Its snout-to-vent length is 100 mm, with a tail length up to 150 mm; its body mass is up to 25 g. It is closely related to the Southern Water Skink, but is endemic to the Western Volcanic Plains, although sadly now classified as 'critically endangered' in Victoria. The National Recovery Plan development has involved researching its distribution, abundance and ecology, with a view to ensuring the preservation of the species. It is currently known from 33 sites, mostly with very small areas of suitable habitat. After a short break, Garry presented a well-illustrated overview of the reptile fauna of the SW Volcanic Plains.

### A selection of excursions

#### Saturday – Red Rock and Lake Corangamite

This full-day excursion offered the chance to make an anti-clockwise circuit of Victoria's largest lake. Led by Helen Langley, we first stopped near Pomborneit, south-east of Camperdown, to view a fine example of dry stone walling, a notable feature of the region. The Cock and Hen Wall derives its name from its coping style. We first accessed the fringe of Lake Corangamite near its southern end, spotting masses of Black-winged Stilts in the distant shallows. The birds reported a solitary Banded Stilt amongst them.

From there, we headed north to Red Rock, near



Red Rock Eruption Zone

Alvie, 17 km NW of Colac. Red Rock is one of the most complex eruption zones in the province and includes maars, tuff rings and scoria cones. The summit lookout provides fine views of these features. Up to 30 interacting eruption points have been mapped here, in an area measuring 4 km by 3 km south of Alvie. Worth a mention also is that, during a brief stop half way up to the summit, we enjoyed the opportunity to look down on three Australian Kestrels (possibly a family) wheeling inside a crater below us.

Lunch was enjoyed in a small park in the heritage village of Beeac, where an excellent outdoor museum celebrates its windmill construction industry in its early years. Well laid-out interpretive panels paint a picture of community life – its schools, churches and commercial premises, etc.

In the afternoon, we continued our circuit of Lake Corangamite, crossing the barrages between it and Lake Martin and driving through Foxhow. Few birds were seen as we travelled from Lake Gnarpurt back to base.

#### Sunday – Mt Elephant

On a full-day excursion, we headed north from Camperdown, the destination being Mt Elephant, near Derrinallum. This peak is a steep-sided scoria cone rising 240 m above the surrounding volcanic plains with a crater 90 m deep. It was formed about 20,000 years ago. Along with scoria, the cone contains blocks and bombs of solid lava with common megacrysts of granite and olivine.

When the previously privately owned mount became available for purchase in the year 2000, it was bought by the local community in partnership with Trust For Nature. The local committee of management has developed walking trails and is progressively planting indigenous trees and grasses. There are plans for construction of an interpretive centre.

Most of the party took the opportunity to climb to the summit as part of the Crater Rim Walk, which can be comfortably completed in 1.5 hours.

Lunch was enjoyed on the shore of nearby Lake Tooliorook, with views of Mt Elephant across its waters.

Most of the afternoon was spent on an historic private property south of Lake Tooliorook, with both substantial homestead and large barn of bluestone construction. The owner kindly allowed our group access to two dams for birding. Unlike those on the same excursion on

the previous day, we failed to see any Brolgas. However the second dam carried many birds, including Eurasian Coot, Hoary-headed and Australasian Grebe, Black Swan and various ducks such as Chestnut Teal, Hardhead and Australasian Shoveler.

## Monday morning – Mt Leura and Mt Sugarloaf Reserves

One of the concluding half-day excursions saw us head for the adjacent Mt Leura and Mt Sugarloaf Reserves on the edge of Camperdown. Mt Leura, originally gifted to the community by the Manifold family, is now owned by the Corangamite Shire, whilst the National Trust took possession of the larger Mt Sugarloaf in 1972 following a conservation battle to protect it from further quarrying. The combined area of the two reserves is 50 hectares.



Mt Sugarloaf

Today, a committee for the pair of reserves guides their development, supported by a paid part-time Project Coordinator, who gave us an introduction to the site and accompanied us on a walk from the Mt Leura summit back down to the reserve entrance, passing the base of the Mt Sugarloaf cone. On the way our leader explained that by the middle of last century the two mounts were largely bare of original trees; since 1995, over 35,000 indigenous trees and shrubs have been planted by the local community, most having been grown at a nursery at Camperdown College. I would only add that the interpretive signage through the reserves is excellent, setting a standard one could wish was achieved elsewhere.

## Conclusion

Lunch together at South Beach on Lake Bullen Merri afforded the chance to thank our friends of Timboon FNC for hosting a great camp as we bid our farewells.

Philip Rayment



Interpretive Centre at Mt Sugarloaf Reserve

## SHADWELL QUARRY AND MAARS

As the Camperdown area was unknown to us, when we chose our excursions at the March SEANA Campout we really did not know what we were selecting but thought that a visit to a quarry would be interesting even though we didn't have the hammer we were told to take. Shadwell Quarry is north of Mortlake and owned by the local council and, when we stopped in the town to meet our guide, we were asked to sign a form accepting responsibility if we were hurt while at the quarry.

The Mt Shadwell area was created between nine thousand and twenty thousand years ago when magma pushed through an older granite layer. Mount Shadwell is the highest of a group of scoria cones surrounded by lava flows. There is no distinct crater as the scoria mounds overlap, creating several shallow crater-like depressions. The scoria is quarried to provide a basis for roads, drains, etc, and is mixed with limestone for use as soil. The scoria is coarse in texture and both red and black, and contains numerous basalt blocks and smallish "bombs"; the latter are mainly oval in shape and contain the olivine crystals which were the reason for our visit to the quarry—so the lumps of crystals are surrounded by basalt. Olivine is a magnesium-iron silicate that forms in metamorphic rocks. It is green or yellow in colour, hence its name, and when the crystals are large enough to be shaped into gemstones it is known as peridot. A box containing several small cut gemstones with a value of about \$4000, and found by our guide, was passed around for us to see. We were told that, in the past, the main source of peridot was from USA where the quarry is situated on a Reservation owned by the indigenous people. Sales of peridot were their main source of income until they opened a casino. That quarry is now closed and off-limits to outsiders.

The height of the wall of the quarry showed the depth of the layers formed by the volcanic



action and a long pile of limestone to one side was ready for use. The bombs and scoria rocks were in a large pile and a huge scoop had pushed some down to make them easier for us to access. Some Field Nats were assiduous in hunting for gemstone size olivine, some hunted for bombs just for the fun of hammering them open to discover what was inside, some grandparents were looking for lumps of olivine to take home for grandchildren, one person was gathering bombs to take home to put in a pile in her garden, and some people simply gathered interesting rocks for their collection or scoria rocks for their gardens.

After lunch we visited several maars, shallow salt lakes formed by volcanic action. The area has underlying old granite which was covered by water. As the hot molten lava came up through the water between nine thousand and twenty thousand years ago, "the water turned to steam and it all went boom! And that was that". These flat-floored craters have steep inner walls and a low surrounding rim built of fragments of rock materials blown out of the crater during eruptions. The first maar we visited was cut by the road and we stopped between the two sections for bird-watching. A raft of pelicans floated on the far side of the southern part. Even through the telescopes that were set up it was difficult to identify species of birds because of their distance from us, especially those that were in the several flocks where the birds were crowded together, but of interest were both Banded and Black-winged Stilts with their long pink legs, Red-necked Stints and a tiny Red-capped Plover paddling in the distant shallows.

A dry maar we drove past was covered with mounds of salt glistening in the sunshine. The third lake, Lake Keilambete, is surrounded by farmland. Its water is two and a half times saltier than the sea and comes only from rainfall and run-off from the surrounding rim and its level has dropped six feet during the past few years because of the drought. There are no streams entering or leaving it and all water loss is by evaporation. The bed of the lake has a layer of limestone and it is thought that this area was once under the sea. The rocks around the edge of the lake are rather unusual as

they are in quite thin layers which crackled and cracked beneath our feet as we walked on them. Our leader did not know how they were formed but one of the group suggested that they were formed by the continual wash of the waves leaving behind a film of limestone which gradually built up into layers as the water evaporated and, from the look of them, that could be so. Dark grey volcanic material had built up at the far end of the quarry and its layers were exposed by weathering, or possibly some quarrying. In the steep rim beside the maar, the old trunk of a tree which had been hidden beneath a depth of soil has reappeared because of the erosion of the bank. The only two birds there looked rather lonely: a Silver Gull floating about overhead and an Australian Shelduck.

The Camperdown area is renowned for its dry stone walls and we were taken to a viewing platform that overlooks a section of those. To keep the skill of wall-building alive, the old stone-wallers trained a group of locals in the art, including our leader, Ian. It is expensive to have someone build the walls but it does add to the value of the property as they are good fire-breaks. Some walls, called consumption dykes, were originally erected to use up the large numbers of rocks that littered the properties, while others were a protection from rabbits. The various types of walls have differing styles of construction. Those which are only one stone in width are called Galloway Dykes; to achieve a stable Galloway Dyke is a highly skilled operation. A Cock and Hen wall has pointed coping stones protruding at intervals above the others along the top of the wall.

We might not have known what we were choosing when we selected that excursion but were glad we did as it was a most interesting and instructive day.

Our last place of call was Mt. Noorat, a fairly steep volcanic cone with a deep crater on the outskirts of the Noorat township. This perfect crater is 400 metres wide and 159 metres deep. It is one of the best preserved volcanoes in Victoria and the signboard said it was of international importance. In the past it was an important meeting place for the traditional owners and other groups who came from the coast to trade. From it we

looked out onto fairly flat farmland though other stony rises could be seen in the surrounding area.

On Monday we went to Mt. Mumblyn which we chose because of its unusual name. It was a crater lake tucked into the surrounding farmland. Of particular interest there was the considerable depth of peat tucked around its edges. It was difficult to climb down to the water's edge and the peat was dry and crumbly so an unwary step had a leg disappearing up to the knee. This was a bird-watching day and all the other lakes we visited were maars, but it was interesting to hear information about the local area which could only be told by a person who lived there, as our leader Helen does. A number of vehicles were left behind when we were held up while turning onto a road and we wandered around the countryside until those of us who were lost used our RACV maps to find our way to the largest maar we visited, Lake Elingamite. A noteworthy bird there amongst all the other water birds was a lonely Magpie Goose which, through the telescope, could be seen hiding in the reeds, turning its head in all directions, probably seeking the support of some companions.

Estelle Adams

## KANGAROO ISLAND NATURALLY

We were fortunate to have club member Phil Rayment as our 'guest' speaker at our April meeting and considering he only had short notice he gave a remarkably well structured and knowledgeable presentation on Kangaroo Island. His talk was entitled Kangaroo Island Naturally but he not only covered a very broad range of natural history topics but also provided a historical perspective and included many scenic landscape photographs of the island.

We learnt that the island was first sighted by white people by Matthew Flinders in March 1802 and was then named Kangaroo Island. He was followed soon after by Nicolas Baudin who mapped much of the south and west coastline. Although the island was uninhabited at that time there is evidence that aborigines were living on the island as recently as 2000 years ago. The first formal settlement was not established until 1836

near present-day Kingscote by the South Australian Company.

It surprised many of us to learn that Kangaroo Island is the third largest island in Australia following Tasmania and Melville Island. It is 155 km long (east - west) and up to 55 km wide (north - south) and we were all pleased to discover that over half the island is made up of native bush. There is quite a large number of conservation reserves on the island (18) and one national park, Flinders Chase NP, which covers 34,000 ha in the SW corner of the island.

The island is geologically interesting because of its complexity. Most of the island is made up of Cambrian sandstone but there are other sedimentary rocks including shales and many metamorphic rocks including schists. There are also many granite outcrops on the island and perhaps the best known is the Remarkable Rocks with weird weathering shapes. We were also shown some photographs of the Kelly Hill limestone cave system with many stalagmites and stalactites, so the island must have been under sea for part of its geological history. There are also some good examples of glacial scouring particularly at Christmas Cove, near Penneshaw.

Kangaroo Island was only separated from the mainland 10,000 years ago so it was surprising to hear that there is a large number of endemic plants on the island. Out of 891 species of native plants 46 are endemic to Kangaroo Island. Phil showed us a good selection of the endemic plants on the island taken from a reference book, Kangaroo Island's Native Plants by Ivan Holliday and Bev and Dean Overton. A large proportion of these plants (400) are found in Flinders Chase NP. There are also over 60 species of orchids and 19 species of eucalypts, the most common being the mallees.

There are numbers of drooping sheoaks which sustain an important sub species of Glossy Black Cockatoos. This subspecies has been classified as rare and endangered and feeds exclusively on the seeds of this tree which is only found along the coast of Kangaroo Island. The island hosts quite a good variety of birds with 267 recorded

species. Other birds of interest include the Little Penguin, Bush Stone-curlew and Cape Barren Geese. The latter is an introduced species and present in quite large numbers. Good birding areas include Murray Lagoon, to the south, and Duck Lagoon, near Cygnet River.

It was encouraging to hear that the island is free of foxes and rabbits – two of Australia's worst pest mammal species. This may account for the survival of many of Kangaroo Island's native mammal species including the southern brown bandicoot and possums. Some other species of interest is the Kangaroo Island kangaroo which is a subspecies of the western grey kangaroo but is smaller and darker than the mainland species and has longer fur. The Tammar Wallaby is now extinct in the rest of SE Australia but is abundant on Kangaroo Island.

Perhaps Kangaroo Island is best known for its large population of Australian Sea-lions which is among the three largest breeding colonies in Australia. There are also numbers of New Zealand Fur-seals along the south coast which are a different species than the Australian Fur-seal, mostly found in Victoria. We were also shown pictures of the Heath Goanna which is thought by some to be the reason why there are no rabbits on the island, despite their introduction at one point.

Many of us have been to Kangaroo Island and Phil's talk has brought back many pleasant memories to us. Many of us have our own experiences of Kangaroo Island but Phil's knowledge of the island provided us with a better understanding of the significance and importance of the island to the natural history of South Australia.

David Stickney

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 21.5.2012

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 22 June:** Lichens – Simone Louwhoff

**Saturday 23 June:** Uralla Reserve and Lichen Microscope workshop at Trafalgar High School with Simone. Meet Uralla Reserve 10am.

**Friday 27 July:** Winter Members' Night – open theme

**Saturday 28 July:** Crinigan Rd Bushland Reserve, Morwell. Meet 10am.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 30 June: Eucalypts – terminology and identification. Meet 10am at Jack and Marja's, 129 Briggs Rd, Nilma North. Contact: Jackie Tims ☎ 5634 2628 (Wendy is away).

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 3 July: Lyrebird Walk and Baths Rd, Mirboo Nth. Meet by 9.30 at Lyrebird Walk. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Finance – Balances:** Club A/c (now Cash Mgt Trading A/c) \$1538.77. Investment A/c (now Term Deposit) \$12,000.00.

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

Sound system – David S provided a quote for a headset with throat microphone DC1039 \$22.95. Phil will get serial number from speaker system and talk to Jaycar.

LVFNC Web page – David S yet to talk to John Sunderland, but doing some research into social media sites.

Callignee plant survey - \$500 has been received.

LCHS meeting room in Morwell will seat a maximum 50 people. Cost is \$44 plus \$12 for use of kitchen. Phil suggested Migrant Resource Centre, Morwell and Alix suggested Uniting Church Hall, Newborough. Further action next meeting.

Equipment Register – David M has prepared a list of existing equipment. Phil suggested that maps owned by the club be included. One of the donated spotlights is faulty. List process will be ongoing.

Club logo for TRRCR new front entrance sign - Sharon Harrup sent us a copy of how the black and white logo would look. It was decided at meeting to use a copy of the coloured painting which Ken Smith will prepare and to run the club's name as two lines rather than the one line shown in the example.

Another successful Habitat Program was conducted for Year 3 students from the Morwell Primary School on 8 May in the Crinigan Rd Bushland Reserve. The next program will be probably in July. Anyone

interested in helping contact Ken Smith. (All offers welcome).

Some club members have been involved with the relocation of purple Diuris from the non-monitored sites on the Longford Rd to the Darriman Grasslands.

David M has sent out reminders to members whose subscriptions are overdue.

Ken Harris reported on a very successful opening of the Grand Strzelecki Track. About 200 people attended over the two days of activities and walks.

## **Conservation Matters**

Rainforest Alliance members will attend the Hancocks Victoria Plantations Forest Management Certification audit on 25 May. John Poppins will also go along and Phil will attend the initial briefing.

## **NO GUEST SPEAKER FOR JULY – WINTER MEMBERS' NIGHT.**

A chance for club members to have a say on something of interest in the world of natural history.

## **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

Christine Cattanach from Newborough, Meryl Cracknell from Warragul, Iris McAlpine and Mark Wackett, both from Moe. We wish them a long and happy association with the LVFNC.

## **FOR THE DIARY**

**SEANA Spring Camp** in Bendigo area. 17-20 August 2012, hosted by Bendigo FNC. More information available soon.

## **Club dates for August**

Please note the variation from the normal dates. The General Meeting will be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> Friday, not the 4<sup>th</sup>, and the excursion will be held on Saturday 1 September.

**LVFNC Spring Camp** at The Gurdies. 5-7 October 2012.

## **UNUSUAL VISITORS TO OUR DAM**

There is a small dam in the paddock next to our garden. It is a fairly nondescript dam with no vegetation round it and precariously built into the side of a steep bank. It does however attract a number of ducks including wood ducks, black ducks and chestnut teal

and there is the occasional white-faced heron.

I can see the dam clearly from our back veranda and this morning I saw two species that I hadn't seen before. The first was a great egret. Great egrets are solitary birds and usually seen alone but recently there has been an influx of these birds in the Valley. There were four at the Morwell River wetlands and two at Brodribb Road wetland during my recent visits.

The second bird was a white-necked heron which is an occasional visitor to the Valley but this was the first one I had seen in our area this season. The white-necked heron was moving around the dam in an anticlockwise direction and the great egret in a clockwise direction. The next thing I noticed was a second white-necked heron flying in and immediately the first white-necked heron took off as if to see the second white-necked heron off. Instead they circled around the dam a couple of times to get some elevation and then slowly took off into the distance with their slow plodding wing beats.

Both birds breed in south-east Australia mostly along the Murray Darling basins but the white-necked heron did breed in the Morwell River wetlands in one season recently. The movements of both birds can be described as dispersive but also irruptive following wet seasons in central Australia which is probably what we are experiencing now.

The next question I asked was why these birds were here in this small dam. I believed that egrets and herons mostly eat fish but to my knowledge there were no fish in this dam. The answer was probably frogs. According to HANZAZ great egrets mostly eat fish but also eat frogs and white-necked heron eat mostly small aquatic animals. I have recorded at least five species of frogs from this dam including common froglet, common tree frog, striped marsh frog, spotted marsh frog and eastern banjo frog (pobblebonk). These frogs are not often seen but present a spectacular chorus of calls at night. I suspect this chorus will be more limited following our unusual visitors from now on.

David Stickney

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
<b>Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.</b>	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
<b>Sale &amp; District FNC</b>	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
<b>Bairnsdale FNC Inc.</b>	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, should not exceed 1,000 words, and may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number/email has changed.

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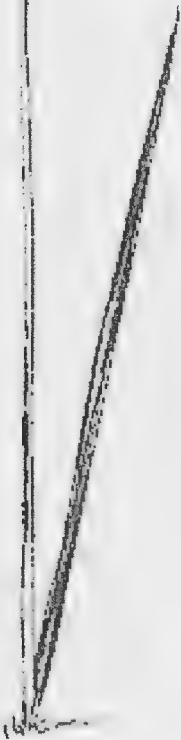


JULY 2012

Issue No. 553



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



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## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 27 July

Winter Members' Night – open theme

Excursion: Saturday 28 July

Crinigan Road Reserve, Morwell – meet 10am.

Bird Group:

Tuesday 7 August: Traralgon South & Phelans property.  
Meet by 9.30 at TRRCR, Hickox St, Traralgon. Contact:  
Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

Botany Group:

Saturday 4 August: Cornwalls property, Thorpdale – visit  
& possible plant survey. Meet 10am at the park in the  
township. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Meeting: Friday 31 August

Tolerable Fire Intervals – Jean-Marc Porigneaux

Excursion: Saturday 1 SEPT

Sale Wetlands. Meet 10am Lake Guthridge, or carpool at  
Traralgon Mexican Restaurant 9.15.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE

Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK

Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE

Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE

Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 15 AUGUST 2012**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

**PLEASE NOTE: SUBS FOR 2012-13 ARE NOW OVERDUE & MEMBERSHIP WILL  
BE CANCELLED IF NOT PAID** See inside back cover for payment details

## BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY - TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

Chris Tzaros, from Birdlife Australia, drove through foul weather to give our members a most informative, enjoyable and inspiring presentation.

He describes himself as a bird watching ecologist, with photography providing a useful tool to record data for his work on threatened birds.

Photographers need a deep understanding of their subject to get good results. Such understanding helps to translate science into nature. Chris' background interest and ecology training, combined with an addiction to photography, enable him to produce the excellent photos he used to illustrate and explain his points.

The advent of, relatively cheap, digital cameras give lots of people the ability to take good bird and nature photos. "For a spare \$3-4,000 you can buy a good rig"

However, whatever your budget, spend the biggest part to buy the glass, the best lens you can, to give better results. An array of lenses if possible – a long (300mm or more focal length), medium (70-200mm) and short (24-105mm) and a 10-22mm wide angle lens for habitat photography. Depending on usage, prime lenses are sharper but cumbersome, heavy and harder to use than a single zoom lens (eg 100-400mm) that is more versatile.

**The elements of a good photograph: lighting (exposure), composition and moment**, are hard to put together. **Lighting (exposure)** is technically a function of shutter speed, light sensitivity and aperture. **Shutter speed** determines the length of light exposure. Fast speeds reduce camera shake and can prevent or capture motion blur. No impact if the camera and the subject are still but important if there is movement. Focusing on the body, the bird's legs may blur indicating movement that you may wish to capture. Shutter speed can be used in a creative sense. For birds generally the faster the better depending on light.

**Light sensitivity the ISO**, (with film used to be called ASA), of a digital camera's sensor affects the amount of light captured

in the image. There is an ISO adjuster somewhere on every camera. Higher settings of ISO increase the shutter speed but also introduces "noise" that looks like dust or granulation on the picture. Chris does not use above ISO 800 to keep the "noise" down. Chris recommends that you try it out.

**Aperture**, the size of the lens opening, f-stop or number, controls the amount of light entering the lens onto the digital sensor plate. It is the major determinant of exposure. The lower the number; the wider open the aperture. Shutter speed is lengthened as you increase f-stops.

**How do you control exposure?** Cameras have various modes. Automatic mode, creative control mode (eg sport, portrait), manual mode and two types of priority mode S(Tv), or A(Av) where you choose the aperture and the camera automatically selects the shutter speed. Chris photographs birds by choosing Av and ISO and letting the camera select exposure time.

The photographer can still control the overall exposure by exposure compensation where you manually, under or over expose (by changing from the camera's exposure equilibrium setting) for condition and subject. Where there are big tonal differences between the subject and the background you need to help the camera out with exposure compensation. Correct exposure is an "artistic" choice.

Natural light can be fun varying shooting from sun behind (usual), to backlight (using exposure compensation) or sidelight (eg low morning light) on the subject. The "golden hours" are the first and last couple of hours of the day especially in summer. "When the light ain't right use your own light source", that is use a flash. Full flash, on dull days or at night or in dense rainforest, to get colours in the birds. Flash when overcast, even light or on bright sunny days to eliminate deep shadows. Flash control and exposure need to be well controlled for the desired outcome even when it means more gear to carry.

When asked about possible detrimental (to the bird/owl) effects of using a flash he has not found or heard evidence that it causes a problem.

**Composition:** the subject versus the background; the influence of aperture on the depth of field. Low f-stop, gives narrow depth of field, increasing the f-stop will increase the depth in focus. Varying with the situation, single or multiple birds, Chris illustrated f 5.6 (that he mostly uses) and f 6.3 showing the birds in sharp focus and the background indistinct. He always focuses on the face preferring that to be in sharp focus. The depth of field is determined by the relative distance of your subject to the background. Sometimes aperture alone is insufficient so increase the distance between the subject and the background if possible.

The position of the subject in the frame is important to consider even though you may crop later. A subjective assessment; subject not always in the centre. Eye contact of the bird, where it is looking, using varying head angles. Close isn't always best, habitat context can enhance the picture. "Get on their level"- wear shorts and jump in the swamp like Chris.

**Field Techniques:** stalking, nest vigils, sit and wait, call playback, and using a combination of these.

**Stalking** keep low, less like a human, crawl and slither, wear natural coloured clothing, go slow taking photos on the way and also watching through the view finder for the right moment when the bird may be calling, looking, stretching etc.

**Nest vigils** are very obtrusive and can lead predators to the nest. However you may capture additional aspects of bird biology and behaviour.

**Sit and wait** is one of the better ways to capture birds naturally. Temporary hides (eg cloth over your body and camera) increase chances of getting close images and reducing disturbance. However very time consuming.

**Call playback** (using an mp3 players and portable amplifier) can be very obtrusive if used incorrectly but can be very effective (bringing birds down from the canopy) if used correctly (for short time, out of the breeding season) with minimal impact. Also using a temporary hide. Weigh up your options in the field to give the best results with the least disturbance.

**Know your subject** – understand the behaviour of birds, understand their habits, think like a bird (bird brained?).

**Processing and editing** - develop, refine and practice an editing workflow. Software such as Adobe Photoshop can be a photographer's best friend. It enables you to make image adjustments such as cropping, adjusting shadows/highlights, saturation (lighting) levels, sharpening etc and you can do more sophisticated work like "noise" reduction, clone out sticks, background blurring and red-eye removal.

**In the end** A lot of bird photography does come down to luck. Luck to just find the subject. You require an understanding of photographic principles. Good results can often be made better with editing. Buy the best lens you can afford. Back-up digital files and always carry spare memory cards and charged batteries in a safe waterproof place.

So much information, with clear explanation and illustration. Chris certainly assisted us in developing our passion for and abilities in bird photography. Thanks, Chris.

Alix Williams

**Conservation photography** is a term applied when an image is used to highlight a species or conservation issue; to educate people or to find out things through research.

Recommended website to view an 18 minute documentary

<http://www.ilcp.com/videos/witness-defining-conservation-photography>

## SUMMER CAMP FALLS CREEK

**Saturday Afternoon** After lunch we travelled to the 'Ruined Castle', a 40 – 60 million year old basalt plug which had intruded the surrounding rock, in this case gneissic (=foliated or striated) granite of 500 million year age. The basalt plug had cooled underground so the process was slow, with the basalt shrinking in a regular fashion forming six sided columns. According to the signage at the site, uplift in of the area occurred about 1 million years ago forming the Bogong High Plains. Subsequent erosion has removed the overlying granite to expose the columns.

Our attention then turned to the plants, firstly to the twin-flowered Knawel, *Scleranthus biflorus* with its bright green dense mat. Close by was its relative, the Alpine Colobanth (*Colobanthus sp*) which also forms close packed clumps. Both species are members of the Family Caryophyllaceae. This clumping or cushioning is a characteristic of high altitude or latitude vegetation as it is protection from the cold and wind. Many of the larger shrubs present here such as the Mountain Plum Pine (*Podocarpus lawrencei*) and a rock hugging Tree Violet (*Hymenanthera dentata*) present at this locality also have a dense habit with the crowded leaves preventing wind and snow from entering the interior of the plants thus keeping the warmth in. Snow forms an insulating blanket and protects from severe frost damage. Snow Gums growing together in clumps also for a hummock shape which helps deflect wind. Their leaves have a thick layer of wax and an antifreeze compound in the leaf cells to prevent freezing. Such measures may also protect them from the summer heat. Other plants have different strategies. The Yam Daisy has a thick storage root to survive the winter and sprout in the warmer weather. Another species of interest was a Clubmoss (*Lycopodium fastigatum*) with its yellow apical cones of sporangia.

At Pretty Valley Hut, our next stop we found the two varieties of *Olearia phlogopappa*, *O. phlogopappa* var. *flavescens* and *O. phlogopappa* var. *subrepanda*, the first having larger leaves and longer flower head stalks. There was a discussion as to whether we had found two species of *Pimelea* growing next to each other, one with deep red bracts covering the flower heads and the other with pompom heads about 2.5 cm in diameter. Ken H. pointed out it was the one species, *P. ligustrina* at different stages of flower development. A Veronica, *V. serpyllifolia* was thought to be an introduced species but the 'Flora of Victoria' comments that this species may include both native and naturalised specimens and those in the alpine area including the Bogong High Plains may be possibly native. Also near the hut was *Richea continentis*, a prickly epacrid and the smaller of the two Victorian *Richea*

species. David Mules reported young Flame Robins, Silvereyes, White Browed Scrubwrens, Brown Thornbills, Grey Fantails and a Pied Kurrawong.

The final stop was at Mt McKay, 1842 meters high and the highest drivable point in Australia. Here we were well above the tree line and the hummocky vegetation looked as if it had been planted as a garden. Masses of *Craspedia* sp with the largest orange flower heads I have ever seen and *Olearia phlogopappa* contrasting with white flower heads. The 360 degree view was awe inspiring. A lone Mountain Celery (*Aciphylla glacialis*) one of the few specimens of this species seen over the weekend grew here. As commented on in their 1998 book, Ian Fraser and Margaret McJannett as 'One of the plants which has suffered from cattle grazing. Even in Kosciuszko' (National Park where cattle grazing has been prohibited since the 1970s) 'recovery is not yet regarded as complete.' The sun was shining but the wind was very strong giving us a taste of what it would be like in a storm. A fitting end to a good day.

Jackie Timis

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 18.6.2012

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 27 July:** Winter Members' Night – open theme

**Saturday 28 July:** Crinigan Rd Bushland Reserve, Morwell. Meet 10am.

**Friday 31 August:** Tolerable Fire Intervals – Jean-Marc Porigneaux

**Saturday 1 September:** Sale Wetlands. Meet 10am Lake Guthridge, Sale (behind Police Stn) or carpool from Traralgon Mexican Restaurant 9.15.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 4 August: Cornwall's property, Thorpdale – visit and possible plant survey. Meet 10am at park in Thorpdale township. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 7 August: Traralgon South and Phelans property. Meet by 9.30 at Traralgon RRCR, Hickox Street. Thurs 16<sup>th</sup> TRU Wetlands survey. Meet by 9.30 at

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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Morwell River gate. Contact: Alix Williams  
☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

**Finance** – Balances: Cash Mgt Trading A/c \$4037.27. Club A/c \$330.77. Term Deposit \$12,000.00. Moved: We close club cheque account putting the \$330.77 in cash mgt trading account. D Mules/K Harris

## **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

Sound system – Shop where system bought gave Phil suggestions to improve our lapel microphone performance so will try this.

LVFNC Web page – David S has talked to John S and found out more about Yahoo 7 site. Need instructions for its use. Phil is preparing excursion writeups for some local reserves for John to put on web page.

Meeting room for general meeting – David S checked many Moe venues and none suitable. LCHS meeting room in Morwell (\$56, seats 50), Migrant Resource Centre Morwell (\$30, seats about 30), and Uniting Church Hall Newborough (\$50, seats 50+). Also Rose Garden meeting room, Morwell (possibly \$15/hour) could be suitable. Motion: That we take steps to book the Uniting Church Hall in Newborough for our general meeting room when required. K Smith/ D Mules

Club logo - Ken Smith has painted our club orchid and David S is working with Sharon Harrup to put it in text for a suitable logo on the sign at TRRCR.

Tammy Logan, WGCMA – request for information for regional river health strategy on colonial nesting sites and club involvement in waterways. Will ring and discuss.

Springsure Hill Landcare Group invitation to walk on Saturday 10 November to Sweetwater Creek track, which is off Beards Track, Shady Creek (2.6km up Beards Track from Old Sale Rd). Meet 10am for a 10.15 start and finish with BBQ lunch supplied by the Landcare Group at 12.30.

Traralgon South Flora Reserve interpretive signs – email from Sam Fenton with draft. Will forward to Ken Harris.

Botanic painting Exhibition at Arc in Yinnar by Two Kathryns. Opening 3pm 7 July, on until 30 July. Ken Smith has flyer.

Grand Strzelecki Track section Morwell NP to road 4 (Billy's Creek section) has been closed due to damage caused by rain.

## **Conservation Matters**

Nothing to report.

## **GUEST SPEAKER FOR AUGUST**

**Jean-Marc Porignaux** has a Bachelor of Applied Science (Parks, Recreation & Heritage), and a Master of Science (Environmental GIS). His job title is Fire Planner (Ecology) with DSE, where he has been working for 7 years. His main roles are to develop fire ecology assessments for landscape areas and also to undertake flora and fauna monitoring on selected planned burns. Jean-Marc's talk will be about Ecological Fire Planning that will include how we determine and use tolerable fire intervals in fire planning.

## **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

David Williamson from Moe – we wish you a long and happy association with the LVFNC.

## **FOR THE DIARY**

**SEANA Spring Camp** in Bendigo area **17-20 August**, hosted by Bendigo FNC. Registration due by 20 July, but places may still be available as participants need to organize their own accommodation. Information available from Wendy, or email: [info@bendigofnc.com.au](mailto:info@bendigofnc.com.au)

**LVFNC Spring Camp** at The Gurdies **5-7 October**. Accommodation at Grantville Lodge. Self-catered, BYO linen, blankets/sleeping bag and pillow. More details later.

## **PLEASE NOTE**

### **CLUB DATES FOR AUGUST**

The General Meeting will be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> Friday, not the 4<sup>th</sup> ie. **31 August**, and the excursion to Sale Wetlands will take place on **Saturday 1 September**.



## LVFNC BIRD SURVEY TRU WETLANDS

On 10th May the bird group carried out our three monthly bird survey of the TRU Wetlands near Morwell. It proved rather different from earlier surveys. For a start, we were told that a party of senior staff were being escorted around the area, starting at 10.30 and that we could not go in to the wetlands, until that visit was completed. We were also a very small party. Myself and David Stickney were the whole survey team, although our escort for the day was Denis Nagle, so we were effectively three observers.



We filled in an hour and half at Witt's Gully, doing a little bird (and butterfly) watching until we could start our main objective in the wetlands.

David was able to photograph this Meadow Argus butterfly (*Junonia villida*), still on the wing very late in the year.

When we finally started our wetland survey, we followed our usual route. The upper level that we visited first had far fewer ducks than usual, but did include one Blue-winged Shoveller. Little Black Cormorants were in good numbers, we saw at least 8 and they were behaving strangely. They were moving rapidly about on the surface and frequently doing shallow plunge dives, shaking a spray of water of their heads and necks. While we were there a large flock of White-faced Herons flew overhead, making our total count of these to birds to 14, more than we usually see. There were also Darters present both on the upper and lower levels. As we traversed the ridge between the levels, a Peregrine Falcon flew overhead, undoubtedly the bird of the day! Further along the ridge we got a big surprise. A baby wombat barged into David Stickney's legs and disappeared down the bank to the upper level. A moment later a full-size wombat charged through our little party and disappeared down the other side of the ridge. We were still discussing this event, when the

baby wombat charged into Denis Nagle's legs and he picked it up. It's cries brought its mother back on the scene, but I was able to get a picture before Denis let it go and mother and child disappeared down the bank together.



From the lookout point on the road, we checked the eagle's nest, but there was no sign of an eagle at the nest, although later a Wedge-tailed Eagle did fly past. On the other side of the road, we could see several Australian Pelicans, a Yellow-billed Spoonbill and a couple of Little Pied Cormorants. Duck numbers continued to be low, but the Blue-winged Shoveller was now accompanied by his mate.

At this point David Stickney had to leave us and Denis Nagle and I complete the walk along the lower levels without him. We were able to add a couple of Wood Duck and three Australian Shelduck to our list. Denis reported that he had heard at least two Shelduck calling. When we walked back we found 3 shelduck had landed on the same islet as the group of pelicans. We walked right out to the end of the track and I commented that we had seen no Black-shouldered Kites, but that final meadow was the commonest place to see them, and there they were, two of them perched in the dead branches of a tree in the meadow.

We were later finishing than usual and as a result I forgot to complete the survey by

looking over the upper meadow from the road (which had been so productive 3 months earlier), but we did get a few more species on the way out. We saw several Flame Robins in the paddock beside the road and at the



entrance was a small flock of Yellow-

Rumped Thornbills, one of which posed for me on the barbed-wire fence.

Despite the low numbers of duck, we managed to locate 45 different species in our survey. A full bird list is available to anyone interested.

Ken Harris

## HOORAY FOR ACACIA

Some time ago Bon Thompson told the Botany Group that there were moves afoot to divide the wattles into three separate genera. According to the 1997 Flora of Victoria Volume 3, most of Australia's 950 acacias (now thought to be more than 1000 out of the world's 1250) and all of the Victorian species, would be placed into a new genus, *Racosperma*. However name changes take a long time to work through the system of committees who decide these matters. In the 1700s Carolus Linnaeus popularised the binomial system of naming species of organisms (and minerals) so that any scholar who understood Latin, which was the universal language much as English is today, knew what was being described. A system grew up so that the first person to make a description of a plant or animal had the privilege of naming the species 'in ordinary circumstances' (see note).

The committees who decide such matter of great importance generally meet once every six years and in July last year in Melbourne, the Nomenclature Section during which decision are made on the naming of plants, was held in the week before the XVIII International Botanical Congress. At the University of Melbourne 200 experts in this area of botany debated over 5 days the rules governing how plants are to be named. Quite significant changes were made including for the first time, electronic publication of new plants is allowed rather than a hard copy and plant descriptions can be written in English, not just Latin. The following is a report of the other change.

"It has long been recognised, now with strong scientific evidence, that 'acacias' or 'wattles' include a number of separate evolutionary groups. Splitting a genus to name each different group separately is not hugely problematic, but the case of splitting

Acacia resulted in passionate international debate. The issue has been: which group should retain the name *Acacia*? In Vienna in 2005, a decision was taken to conserve the name *Acacia* for the largest group, the Australian group. This was done by making the type species for the genus and Australian species, *A. penninervis*, instead of the original type of 1754, *A. scorpioides* (now *A. nilotica*), a species from Africa. Given the symbolism of acacias in Australia and Africa, this retypification was hotly contested both in public and botanical arenas, with the processes at the Vienna meeting challenged. The IBC meeting in Melbourne ratified the Vienna Code, and after further debate, a clear majority vote (including card votes from herbaria around the world) was for *Acacia* to be retained for the large Australian group. Although not everyone was happy, the consensus was that the processes taken were in order. The Melbourne meeting will go down in history!"(1)

I believe common sense prevailed. Hooray for an Australian *Acacia* I say – and rack off *Racosperma*!

Note. A highly entertaining chapter written by Stephen Jay Gould's book entitled 'Bully for Brontosaurus' concerns a similar type of discussion about *Brontosaurus* really being *Apatosaurus*. The name 'Brontosaurus' as Gould points out is used in museums around the world, in popular dinosaur books and films and is known by that name by millions of children and adults throughout the world as the largest dinosaur which existed. I have a copy of this book if anyone is interested.

1. Reprinted with permission from the School of Botany Annual Report 2011. The University of Melbourne

Jackie Tims

## PLEASE NOTE

### CLUB DATES FOR AUGUST

The General Meeting will be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> Friday, not the 4<sup>th</sup> ie. **31 August**, and the excursion to Sale Wetlands will take place on **Saturday 1 September**.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
<b>Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.</b>	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
<b>Sale &amp; District FNC</b>	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall. Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
<b>Bairnsdale FNC Inc.</b>	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, should not exceed 1,000 words, and may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should be addressed to:	Mrs Gill Bremner The Editor LVFNC Inc. PO Box 719 TRARALGON VIC 3844	Phone: 5174 1730  Email: gill@scribex.net
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AUGUST 2012

Issue No. 554



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

- Meeting: Friday 31 August                      Tolerable Fire Intervals – Jean-Marc Porigneaux
- Excursion: Saturday 1 SEPT                      Sale Wetlands. Meet 10am Lake Guthridge, or carpool at Traralgon Mexican Restaurant 9.15.
- Bird Group:    Tuesday 4 September: Meet by 9.30 at Bellbird Park, Drouin – for details of how to get there see page 3 (BM Notes). Later to Drouin WW Treatment Plant. **If intending to go please contact Alix beforehand.** Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)
- Botany Group:                                      Saturday 8 September: Traralgon South Flora & Fauna Reserve. Meet 10am at Traralgon South Hall. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246
- 

- Meeting: Friday 28 September                      Migratory Waders in Corner Inlet – Susan Taylor
- Excursion: Saturday 29 September                      Yinnar South Flora and Golden Gully. Meet 10am at ARC building beside park in Yinnar.
- 

FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK  
Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE  
Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE  
Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 14 SEPTEMBER 2012

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

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## IMPORTANT NOTE

From **OCTOBER** onwards the club's **General Meetings** will be held in the **Newborough Uniting Church Hall** which is located at the corner of Old Sale Rd and Chamberlain Rd, entry from Chamberlain Rd.

### DIRECTIONS FOR UNITING CHURCH HALL

After leaving the highway at the Newborough exit drive straight ahead through the traffic lights (John Field Drive) then 1km to the next set of lights where you turn **RIGHT** (Old Sale Rd). At the third crossing of the median strip do a U-turn to get back to Chamberlain Rd. Turn **LEFT**, and the entry to the Church grounds, off-street parking and the hall is the **FIRST** drive on the **LEFT**.

### ALTERNATIVE DIRECTIONS FOR UNITING CHURCH HALL

After leaving the highway at the Newborough exit turn **RIGHT** at the traffic lights and then **LEFT** into Monash Rd. At Old Sale Rd turn **LEFT**, then **LEFT** into Chamberlain Rd. The entry to the Church grounds, off-street parking and the hall is the **FIRST** drive on the **LEFT**.

## SECOND IMPORTANT NOTE

Meeting dates for this month – General Meeting 31 August, Excursion 1 September

### LICHEN AT URALLA NATURE RESERVE

Saturday July 23<sup>rd</sup> saw a group of 13 Latrobe Field Naturalists head out in cold but (mostly!) dry weather to the Uralla Nature Reserve in Trafalgar. The group was “lichen hunting” with Simone leading the group. The advantage of looking for lichens is that they are very accommodating and sit still so you can admire them to your heart's content.

We didn't need to move far until we came across the first lichen site. It was an old Eucalypt tree stump, which was richly covered by representatives of the lichen family Cladoniaceae (green). The primary squamules (individual scales, a few mm

across) of *Cladonia rigida* spread over much of the surface. Podetia (stalks) were growing out from these, some bearing apothecia (fruiting structures) that were rounded and brown. Other Cladoniaceae members seen on this trunk included *Thysanothecium scutellatum*, which forms inconspicuous little (up to 5 mm high) “umbrellas”. There were two *Cladia* species too; *C. aggregata* being the most common and forming a richly branched, spreading network of hollow, intertwined podetia. The latter are much more robust and “tree-like” when they are fertile, which can be noted by the black spots at the tips of the podetia. *C. schizopora* is much more difficult to spot as the primary thallus forms a leprose (powder-like) layer over the trunk. In addition, the stalks of the podetia are almost exactly the same colour and only 2-3 mm tall. You can normally pick them out though by the black apothecia at the tips.

A little further along we found representatives of the Parmeliaceae on a Blackwood tree. These included *Punctelia subrudecta* (foliose), which is green with white dots on the upper surface and a pale lower surface that grows closely attached to the bark. We also saw two species of *Parmotrema* (foliose, green-grey) that were both attached to the bark quite loosely and are distinguished most easily from each other by their secondary chemistry. It is handy to carry small quantities of 10% potassium hydroxide solution (K) and a plain bleach solution (C) in dropper bottles. These can be used on the medulla (middle part of the lichen) to get an idea of the chemical compounds that may be present. *Parmotrema perlatum* is smooth and has a positive yellow reaction with K on the medulla (written as K+ yellow) whereas *P. reticulatum* has a network of cracks covering the upper surface and has a K+ yellow turning red reaction. We also saw *Usnea oncodeoides* (fruticose), which forms tufts or strands and is attached to the substratum by a central holdfast and *Ramalina celastri*, which looks similar but is flattened (a little like short shoelaces) and is in the Ramalinaceae. A crustose lichen common on Blackwood was *Megalaria grossa*, which usually has a white or olive, crustlike thallus

that forms a blotch on the bark and has black dots for apothecia.

Moving along very slowly (someone commented even Botanists were fast compared to us!) we came to a large old Messmate Stringybark, which had small patches of *Pannoparmelia wilsonii* (Parmeliaceae) on it. This species is small and yellow with isidia (fingerlike vegetative outgrowths) and is attached to the bark by small brown/black "cushions". On this tree we also saw *Hypogymnia physodes* (Parmeliaceae), which is squishy and hangs loosely from the substratum, grey/white on the upper surface and black under.

After much coaxing the group managed to make it all the way to the end of the boardwalk into the wet gully where *Pittosporum*, *Olearia*, *Pomaderris*, *Eucalypts*, Ferns and Wonga Vine were "dripping" with cryptogams. In this more shaded part of the forest we came across the cyanolichens (lichens containing cyanobacteria – blue-green algae as their photobiont). *Peltigera dolichorhiza* (Peltigeraceae) is leaden grey with apothecia on upturned lobes, resembling "horns" and a white lower surface with rope-like rhizines (root hairs) attaching it to the bryophytes and rock. The brown/black *Collema* (Collemataceae) is almost translucent as it lacks a cortex and is very thin. It grew on the Wonga Vine where it formed small but plentiful tufts. Also on the Wonga Vine was *Pseudocyphellaria neglecta* (Lobariceae) a Gondwanan relict and always a pleasure to find. The genus is recognised by the small dots on the lower surface, which have tufts of medullary hyphae poking through.

There were plenty more lichens seen; *Menegazzia*, *Pertusaria*, *Chrysothrix*, *Baeomyces*, *Psoroma*, *Flavoparmelia* and *Heterodermia*, just to name a few. No doubt there are many more, either too small or too well camouflaged to be seen by us on this particular trip. Perhaps Uralla Nature Reserve can be next on the list of lichen surveys in this region...?

## LICHEN WORKSHOP

Following the fieldtrip to Uralla Nature Reserve the lichen group went to Trafalgar Secondary College where we were able to

use their Science Labs to look at lichens under the stereo (dissecting) microscopes. People worked in pairs as we attempted to identify a number of lichens. The "Key to the genera of Australian Macrolichens" by McCarthy and Malcolm (2004) is a useful way to identify specimens to genus level and is accessible online as a pdf file. (<http://www.anbg.gov.au/abrs/lichenlist/Macrolichens.pdf>). The key worked quite well although it is always difficult to get used to new jargon: fruticose, foliose, apothecia, podetia, isidia, soredia.... and so on! Everyone soldiered on though and managed to key out some of the unidentified workshop specimens as belonging to the genera *Cladonia*, *Pseudocyphellaria*, *Usnea* and *Flavoparmelia*, a pretty good effort.

At 3.30 everyone decided that their brains were saturated and it was time to pack up. Many hands made light work and many thanks to everyone for helping to tidy up the lichen mess left behind. Hopefully the fieldtrip and workshop has shown that YES, lichens can be hard to identify BUT many have quite distinguishing characters and it really doesn't take long before you start to recognise them. Here is an idea for some common names (yes I know it isn't scientific but so much easier to remember). Please feel free to add some favourites of your own! If you are interested in coming along on another lichen trip, please contact Ken. There is usually a trip to Morwell NP every other Friday morning.

Some suggestions for common names for lichens

Little Horns - <i>Peltigera</i>	Old Man's Beard - <i>Usnea</i>
Shoe Laces - <i>Ramalina celastri</i>	White Pimples - <i>Pertusaria gibberosa</i>
Forest Sponge - <i>Cladia aggregata</i>	Chimney Stacks - <i>Cladonia</i>
Trumpets - <i>Ramalina inflata</i>	Yellow Leather - <i>Flavoparmelia rutidota</i>
Holepunch Lichen - <i>Menegazzia</i>	Yellow Powder - <i>Chrysothrix candelaris</i>

Simone Louwhoff

## LEADBEATER'S POSSUM

Tamara Leitch, who recently joined the LVFNC, is a field ecologist with Wildlife Unlimited and has spent the past two months working with the Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) surveying Leadbeater's Possums *Gymnobelideus leadbeateri* in the Victorian Central Highlands.

The population of this endangered species has been estimated at 2,200 mature individuals (IUCN 2008), however the recent bushfires are likely to have reduced the extent of suitable habitat, and continued logging of hollow-bearing trees adds further pressure. Up-to-date information on the distribution of the species was sought by forest managers to enable future planning.

A small team of researchers contracted by ARI, including Tamara, conducted two nocturnal surveys at each of 180 one-hectare sites (across an area bordered roughly by Warburton in the west, Thomson Dam in the east, Marysville in the north and Neerim in the south). Playback of the possum's call was used to attract animals within hearing distance, as well as the call of the Boobook *Ninox boobook* to elicit an aggressive 'predator-mobbing' response in the possums. A thermographic camera was used to detect presence of animals from up to 60m away, before the species was identified with a torch and binoculars.

The Leadbeater's Possums were present at approximately 30 sites, with 1-5 individuals seen on each occasion, in forests of Mountain Ash *Eucalyptus regnans*, Alpine Ash *E. delegatensis*, Shining Gum *E. nitens* and Snow Gum *E. pauciflora*. All of these trees have bark that peels in ribbons, harbouring invertebrates that form a substantial part of the possums' diet. The possums also feed on the exudates of certain Acacia species, so a wattle understorey is often considered a habitat requirement of the species, but some alpine sites had no Acacia species present. Possums were also found in young regenerating Ash forest, where old trees had been left standing amid the clear-felled surrounding forest.

While survey efforts in this study concentrated on montane forests in the Central Highlands, there is an isolated

population of Leadbeater's Possums at Cockatoo Creek, Yellingbo (where the main tree species are Swamp Gum *E. ovata* and Mountain Swamp Gum *E. camphora*), and historical records exist near the Koo Wee Rup swamp (in forest dominated by Manna Gum *E. viminalis*) and at Mt Wills in northeast Victoria. With ever-improving survey methods, it's possible that future work may reveal populations of Leadbeater's Possums existing outside their currently-recognised distribution.

Tamara Leitch

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 23.7.2012

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 31 August:** Tolerable Fire Intervals – Jean-Marc Porigneaux

**Saturday 1 September:** Sale Wetlands. Meet 10am Lake Guthridge (behind Police Station) or carpool from Traralgon Mexican Restaurant 9.15.

**Friday 28 September:** Migratory Waders in Corner Inlet – Susan Taylor

**Saturday 29 September:** Yinnar South Flora & Golden Gully. Meet 10am at ARC building beside park in Yinnar.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 8 September: Traralgon South Flora & Fauna Reserve. Meet 10am at Traralgon South Hall. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 4 September: Bellbird Park then Drouin WW treatment Plant. In Drouin turn south over railway, in 300m take 2<sup>nd</sup> right into Porter Place, then veer left into Lampard Rd for about 1 km to Bellbird Park. Meet there by 9.30. **If intending to go please contact Alix in advance as she needs to know how many are going.** Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Finance – Balances:** Cash Mgt Trading A/c \$4029.56. Club A/c \$330.77. Term Deposit \$12,000.00.

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

Sound system – Phil is trying different orientations of present equipment.

LVFNC Web page – Phil is in process of preparing excursion descriptions and will include a number of photos.

Meeting room for general meeting – can use LCHS room until September, so start at Uniting Church Hall Newborough in October. Organize to visit after August meeting.

Club logo – Suggest put new logo on back of Naturalist.

Traralgon South Flora Reserve interpretive signs – email from Sam Fenton requesting input will be forwarded to Ken Harris.

Expo at Old Gipps town October 14 – will respond that we will have a display.

*High Country Plants* published by CSIRO – will consider ordering for club when we know more about the book.

Mary Austin 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration to be held at 3pm on Monday 27 August at Ken Harris's. Will hold BM there afterwards around 5pm.

Program Planning Meeting Wednesday 19 September at Lorna Long's, 6pm for tea and meeting at 7.30. Soup provided, bring a plate to share.

SEANA accumulated reserves – have sent out request to members for input on spending. Responses will be submitted by Phil at next meeting.

Yallourn mine flooding – Environment Victoria asked club if we have contacts in Waterwatch who could test water quality in Latrobe River where water is being pumped from mine. John Poppins has taken this on.

Club membership list has email addresses added. Will make available to committee.

## Conservation Matters

Yinnar South Reserves DSE planned burns – email from Brett McGennissen, Environmental Planner Latrobe City with information and opportunity to raise any concerns.

Rare and Endangered orchid *Thelymitra hiemalis* (winter sun orchid) found at Traralgon South but eaten by a rabbit. Orchid of State Significance *Pterostylis*

*torvyana* x found at Holey Plains (normally Brisbane Ranges).

Purple Diuris monitoring site at Chessum Rd has been slashed but not Tanjil Rd site. Burgan has been poisoned on some non monitored sites.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER

Susan Taylor is the senior Flora and Fauna Officer at the Department of Sustainability and Environment based at Yarram. She will talk about migratory waders in Corner Inlet.

## FOR THE DIARY

**Heart Morass, Sale Field Trip Saturday 8 September.**

WGCMA have invited interested club members to join their field trip. Meet 10am outside the old Sale High School – from Traralgon turn right off the Highway at first set of traffic lights (at Raymond St) and park opposite the motel. More information: Matt Bowler, River and Wetlands Officer, WGCMA, Traralgon ☎ 1300 094 262. Mobile: 0427 831 289

The club is planning to put this area on our excursion list for next year. For some background information about the Heart Morass read on further.

## Program Planning for 2013

**Wednesday 19 September** at Lorna Long's, 99 Chamberlain Rd, Newborough, 6pm for tea, meeting to start 7.30. Soup provided, bring a plate to share.

**LVFNC Spring Camp at The Gurdies 5-7 October.**

Accommodation at Grantville Lodge. Self-catered, BYO linen, blankets/sleeping bag and pillow. More details later.

**Springsure Hill Landcare Group Walk in the Bush Sat 10 November.**

The club has been invited to join this activity at Sweetwater Creek Track, which is off Beards Track, Shady Creek – 2.6km up Beards track from Old Sale Rd. Meet at 10am for a 10.15 start, finishing with BBQ lunch at 12.30 supplied by the Landcare group.

Rob & Caroline Gully 0413 347 665

*The following is taken from the WGCMA Newsletter, Autumn 2012.*

## HEART MORASS CELEBRATIONS

The Heart Morass Committee of Governors celebrated the five year anniversary of the Heart Morass wetland restoration project recently.

The restoration project began in 2007 when Field and Game Australia's Wetland Environmental Task Force Public Fund (WET Trust) invested over \$1.1 million to purchase a property which covered 750 hectares of the Heart Morass wetland.

This was followed by the purchase of an additional property in 2009. The property is now 1050 hectares in size and features wetlands, red-gum woodlands and over eight kilometres of the lower Latrobe River.

Over the past five years the Heart Morass wetland has undergone a remarkable transformation from a barren, saline landscape into a flourishing and ecologically diverse wetland system.

The success of the restoration project is the result of a formal partnership between Field and Game Australia, BugBlitz Trust, Hugh DT Williamson Foundation, Watermark Inc. and the WGCMA.

According to WGCMA CEO Martin Fuller, the project is one of the largest ecological restoration projects on private land in Australia, and has helped to enhance the environmental, cultural, social and economic values of the Heart Morass, which ultimately contributes to the health of the Gippsland Lakes system.

Ideal seasonal conditions throughout last year have helped to speed up the rehabilitation process, contributing to the best ecological conditions seen within the wetland in decades.

Recent surveys by Field and Game Australia and environmental consultants have recorded over 30,000 waterbirds of many species within the wetland.

Notable species including Glossy Ibis, Freckled Duck, Intermediate Egret, White-bellied Sea Eagle and Plumed Whistling Duck have returned to the Heart Morass in great numbers this year. A population of the threatened Green and Golden Bell Frog has also been recorded during monitoring work.

The Chair of the Heart Morass Committee of Governors, David Hawker, emphasised the significant role that volunteers from the partner groups have made to the success of the project.

The Heart Morass has also served as an outdoor classroom for over 2000 local primary school students who have enjoyed hands-on activities as part of the BugBlitz program.

The BugBlitz program provides students with an opportunity to learn about science and the environment through activities which include water testing, fauna surveys and tree-planting.

The property was also opened up to the public for the first time in fifty years at a community day in 2010, which attracted over 300 people to the site.

The committee hopes to hold more community events at the Heart Morass in coming years to showcase the progress of the project and the community and environmental values of the wetland environment and its surrounds.

## CRINIGAN ROAD EXCURSION IN JULY

On Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> July, club member Ken Smith led an enjoyable excursion to Crinigan Road Reserve in Morwell. Our club played a leading role in the establishment of this reserve many years ago, and in recent times Ken has taken a keen interest in its further development as a Friend/member of the management committee.

Here are a few photos of plants in flower spotted during the morning:



Slaty Helmet-orchid, *Corybas incurvus*





Nodding Greenhood, *Pterostylis nutans*



Scented Sundew, *Drosera whittakeri*

Philip Rayment

## DOWN MEMORY LANE

*Bon Thompson enlivened one of the club's previous camps at Gelantipy by reading the following poem from O F McHaffie of Park Orchards*

## LAMENT OF AN AMATEUR BIRD-WATCHER

Oh, for a bird of a brilliant hue,  
With distinct markings to give me a clue;  
Not just all-over grey like a thrush,  
Nor one which darts away in a rush  
Ere a chance occurs to adjust the glasses  
For a much better look before it passes.

Oh, for a bird with a brighter dot  
On forehead, or wing, or any spot;  
None of your so-called 'faintly barred',  
Which to find in the book is so very hard,  
But one with its colour plainly defined,  
To refer to the book it's easy to find.

Oh, for a bird for a while to stay still,  
To give me a chance to observe it till  
I can note its colour, is it yellow or buff?  
Till I can take my notes in the rough;  
Not one of those birds which quickly fly;  
I have lost it again and I heave a sigh.

Oh, for a bird that sits out on a limb,  
Not near the trunk where the light is dim;  
Not one that remains behind the cover  
Of leafy shade till I discover,  
And my feelings thus to harrow,  
Because I'm looking at a sparrow.

Oh, for a bird which sits low on a tree,  
Enabling it to be easy to see;  
Not one that high in the eucalypt goes  
Where the flowers abound as it very well  
knows;  
I peer through the glasses, my neck gets a  
crick,  
I don't know the way to take a trick.



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
Sale & District FNC	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
Bairnsdale FNC Inc.	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

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Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, should not exceed 1,000 words, and may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should be addressed to:	Mrs Gill Bremner The Editor LVFNC Inc. PO Box 719 TRARALGON VIC 3844	Phone: 5174 1730  Email: gill@scribex.net
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Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number/email has changed.

Full Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Private) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$50 ☐ Single \$35 ☐ Junior/Student \$25 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

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PO Box 1205

Morwell Vic 3840

SEPTEMBER 2012

Issue No. 555



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



Protect and enjoy

## *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*

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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

Meeting: Friday 28 September      Migratory Waders in Corner Inlet – Susan Taylor  
Excursion: Saturday 29 September      Yinnar South Flora and Golden Gully. Meet 10am at ARC building beside park in Yinnar.  
Bird Group:      Tuesday 2 October: Uralla and Trafalgar Ponds. Meet by 9.30 at Uralla. Thur 11 Oct TRU Wetlands. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)  
Botany Group:      Saturday 13 October: Mt Cannibal. Meet 10am at Mt Cannibal Flora & Fauna Reserve. Turn north off Princes Hwy at the Garfield North Road and travel 2.5km to the Reserve. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

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Excursion: Saturday 27 October      Dutson Downs Excursion. Meet 10am at Longford, or carpool from Traralgon Mexican Restaurant 9.15.

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FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK  
Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE  
Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE  
Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 10 OCTOBER 2012**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

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## SALE WETLANDS

As we gathered beside Lake Guthridge a squad of Eurasian Coots squatted on the south-east bank and a Darter hung itself out to dry on the northern shore. The latter stayed there even when a family began throwing bread to the Pacific Gulls, but it became too much for it when the Coots decided to join the feeding frenzy; it dived in, its snake-like head reappearing far out in the lake. Some of the Coots flew part way and swam the rest of the distance, with the others passing them as they raced across the surface of the lake with wings outspread, barely ruffling the water as the flattened lobes on their toes acted like paddles and gave them momentum. Another bird seen was a Noisy Miner.

In the car park at Lake Guyatt blue-tailed Fairy Wrens hopped tamely about the car, evidently also knowing that humans can be a source of food. Yellow Thornbills flitted through the foliage of a eucalypt and we continued to see them all morning. On the platform on the water a Chestnut Teal and Pacific Black Duck perched beside a stately Pelican which pointed its beak towards the skies. A Reed Warbler could be heard and a Great Egret was seen on the other lake. Back down the road Australian Magpies were warbling while a cacophony of raucous calls came from Purple Swamp Hens. From high up, a young Nankeen Night Heron observed the world but eventually turned its frowning gaze on the group of people clustered below the tree. A Striated Thornbill darted about in the lower branches. Growing beneath the trees, the caps of the brown form of the yellow stainer fungus, *Agaricus xanthodermus*, had begun to split into a crazed pattern.

One of the deciduous trees was beginning to break into bud, but the growth of crustose and foliose lichens coating its branches made it look more like a 'lichen-tree'. A female or young male Satin Bower Bird was active on the ground while up above Brown Thornbills, identified by their call, spread their wings and conversed with each other as they perched on the branches. We could hear a Spotted Pardalote. Down in Flooding Creek a busy Brown Thornbill, hunting among the brown leaves, made the most of

the coverage provided by a shrub toppled in the water. Two adult Black Swans and five cygnets, almost fully grown, fossicked amongst the reeds. Two alien geese preened their feathers on the further bank. The Tree-violet, *Hymenantha dentata*, was a mass of creamy-yellow flowers, with their turned-back petals forming tiny bells. A New Holland Honeyeater called.

As we returned to Lake Guyatt, a Little Black Cormorant flew across to Lake Guthridge. Both an Australian White Ibis and a Straw-necked Ibis stabbed hopefully at the ground, while an Australian Wood Duck and a Chestnut Teal had settled on the island. Along the eastern shore of the lake a Reed Warbler that had been whistling amongst the reeds took flight close to the water's surface and disappeared into Melaleuca shrubs. Other birds seen in that area were a Little Raven, a Little Wattlebird and a Grey Butcherbird as a Whistling Kite soared overhead. Amongst the bright red flowers of a mistletoe growing on a eucalypt was a ladybird, its yellow jacket patterned with zig-zag black lines and glinting in the sunshine.

Beyond the lake, to the south, the lower areas of the paddocks were flooded and larger numbers of birds had gathered on and around them. Amongst them were a White-faced Heron, Hoary-headed Grebes, the smaller Australasian Grebes, Grey Teals which were identified by their pale throats, and Hardheads. On the far bank were Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Masked Lapwings and a couple of hares bobbing about. Welcome Swallows snatched at insects above the water as a Yellow-billed Spoonbill flew off into the distance and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos screeched in the background. A pleasurable time was spent observing and identifying the various species, with there being much discussion before some species, especially the Grey Teals, were finally identified.

As we returned to the car park for lunch, we passed the *Acacia decussens* shrubs (a NSW species) with their masses of bright golden fluff-balls, and another acacia over-infested with mistletoe. Sparrows were at the Powder Magazine and, on the western side of a large pool, Red Wattlebirds and Rainbow

Lorikeets looked for a feed amongst the red flowers of a *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*. The largest bird we saw all day, a noisy Silver Helicopter, flew overhead. A chorus of Australian Magpies serenaded us at lunch-time while three other hopeful ones ventured closer looking for a free feed, until an Australian White Ibis chased them away. It continued to patrol the area but was generally ignored by a multitude of Fairy Wrens. A Crimson Rosella watched on from the trees and a pair of Ravens flew past with beaks full of what looked like food. An Australasian Coot swam across the water with its beak stuffed with bread. Before it reached its comrades, it stopped, dipped the bread in the water then tossed it up in its beak and swallowed it. Through binoculars a pair of Sea Eagles could be seen riding the thermals.

## After Lunch

At Sale Common we parked close to the eastern end of the boardwalk and from there watched Tree Martins dashing in and out of a tall Red Gum which grows beside the deep drain on the northern side of the road. They are distinguishable from the Fairy Martins, which we saw over the water a little later, by their slightly larger size and blue-black crowns instead of the rufous red of the Fairy Martins. Other birds we saw in that area were the White-eared Honeyeater and a Grey Fantail, a Whistling Kite and a Black-shouldered Kite and we heard the call of a Crimson Rosella. Along the Flooding Creek Track an ancient River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), with a huge trunk and branches, leaned steeply towards the east, its angle copied by the drunken lean of the nearby bird hide which had been undermined during the June floods. Other reminders of the floods were the piles of debris and mud amongst the water weeds. A sheet of fern-like pink, the Pacific Azolla *A. ficuloides*, along with some Duckweed, covered much of the surface of the water.

Near the start of the boardwalk a White-plumed Honeyeater was busy in a tree, while a Little Grassbird was seen down amongst the tussocky grass and, for some time, we watched a Masked Lapwing assault a Sea Eagle circling overhead. The Common Froglet *Crinia signifera* sounded its ratchet

in the reeds. Reed Warblers warbled from the reeds and gave us occasional glimpses of them. A Pelican flew in to sail majestically across the water and a Darter kept disappearing beneath it as it went fishing. A mound of sticks on a reed island was a deserted swan's nest. Apart from a few tufts of weed on the handrail and some patches of mud on the boards, there was little evidence of the flood along the boardwalk until we reached the far end of it and saw the broken and tangled reeds and the layer of mud on the wooden seat. Across the water a busy Egret could be seen but, because of the distance, it was difficult to determine which species it was; after some discussion it was decided it was probably an Intermediate Egret. We listened to a variety of bird calls: trills, two different whistles, chimes and a chuck-chuck before a Grey Shrike-thrush flew in to the trees near us to confirm the identity of the songster.

After we left Sale our excursion was not quite finished as travelling west along the highway we stopped at the edge of the road to observe two pairs of birds some distance away in the paddock. One pair were Magpie Larks but the more distant pair were Banded Lapwings, which are much smaller than Masked Lapwings. They had been spotted that morning by some of our Birdos as they drove towards Sale. As I watched these little birds running across the grass, I was amazed that anybody driving along on the far side of the road could have seen them, let alone realised that these birds were something unusual and I marvelled again at the skills of some of our club members.

As I had not nominated to write up this excursion I was not prepared or equipped for it. So, many thanks to everyone who helped me: to Ron who supplied the notepaper and pen and all those who patiently answered my questions, pointed out things and supplied the names of plants and birds. I could not have done it without all your help.

Estelle Adams.

## A GEM AT THORPDALE

The July botany excursion to a property at Thorpdale was a very pleasant surprise. Driving along the main road through the Thorpdale area one sees potato crops, large



dams and cypress hedges – a much cultivated landscape, and although there are some huge eucalypts along the roadside there is very little of the original vegetation to be seen. At the end of Dingley Dell road is Cornwall's property where 100 acres of bush has been preserved. Here we were able to walk through the bush that would have covered the area before it was cleared.

Our guide was Murray Cornwall, whose parents and brother run the farm. After walking some distance down the hill through paddocks we entered a wet forest and walked along above the creek. Beneath the huge Mountain Ash trees was a fern gully with tree ferns and plenty of ground ferns. Kangaroo fern covered damp trunks and *Fieldia* grew up tree ferns, some with large creamy bell flowers. Four *blechnums* and two *aspleniums* were found. It was no surprise to find Blanket-leaf, Muttonwood, Austral Mulberry, Christmas Bush and Musk Daisy-bush here. All the dogwoods we saw were *Cassinia trinerva*.

The property owners knew of three lyrebird nests along the creek, and we were shown one built just above the creek on a steep bank. Probably this would be a place safe from foxes. Old bottles lay in the bush below the site of an earlier house and Balm of Gilead grew wild here. Our progress was slow as we were recording the plants and there were plenty to see. The terrain was fairly difficult for walking as well, with some steep sections and fallen tree debris to negotiate.

We emerged from the bush to lunch in a grassy paddock in the sun. Bruce and Estelle thought it wise to return through the paddocks after our strenuous bush bash. Next we headed into another area of bush that produced new plants such as Mountain Grey gum, *Melaleuca squarossa*, *Gahnia seberiana* and *Pterostylis nutans*. We did a big loop along a track at the back of the farm and entered drier forest dominated by Messmate and Peppermint. This bush adjoins the Mirboo North Forest, and Murray told us that his father was able to drive his tractor through the bush to Mirboo North in the same time that his mother took to drive there right around the road.

Pink flowering *Epacris impressa*. Broom spurge, *Acacia mucronata*, *A. verticillata* and Burgan grew along the track. Murray took us up a side track to show us a huge grey gum with a permanent pool inside its base. He had photographed tiny orchids growing up its trunk, and these were later identified as *Caladenias*. It was a long walk and when we came out of the bush to walk back up the hill to the house not everyone felt up to another detour along the creek to see another lyrebird's nest. Those who did were well rewarded, as not only did we see the hen on the nest, but a little chick in there as well. Growing up on our farm at Gembrook I had seen plenty of lyrebirds, and some nests, but never had I seen birds in the nest. I thought that was pretty special.

Wendy Savage

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 27.8.2012

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 28 September:** Migratory Waders in Corner Inlet – Susan Taylor

**Saturday 29 September:** Yinnar South Flora & Golden Gully. Meet 10am at ARC building beside park in Yinnar.

**Friday 26 October:** Biodiversity Management at Dutson Downs – Deb Archer

**Saturday 27 October:** Dutson Downs excursion. Meet 10am at Longford or carpool Mexican Restaurant Traralgon 9.15.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 13 October (Spring Camp is on previous weekend): Mt Cannibal. Meet 10am at Mt Cannibal Flora & Fauna Reserve. Turn north off Princes Hwy at the Garfield Nth Road and travel 2.5km to the Reserve. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 2 October: Uralla and Trafalgar ponds. Meet at Uralla by 9.30. Thur Oct 11 TRU Wetlands. **If intending to go please contact Alix in advance.** Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

**Finance** – Balances: Cash Mgt Trading A/c \$4112.58. Club A/c closed 23.7.12. Term Deposit \$12,000.00.

**Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

Sound system – present system is satisfactory if speakers placed behind person talking.

LVFNC Web page – David S attended presentation on using social media for organizations.

Meeting room for general meeting – start at Uniting Church Hall Newborough in October. Will inspect premises at program planning meeting as building is close to Lorna's house.

Program Planning Meeting Wednesday 19 September at Lorna Long's.

SEANA camp and meeting – 19 members attended. SEANA fund spending discussed. Camps up to 2015 organized except one. One third of bus costs used for camp excursions will be subsidised by SEANA.

Spring Camp to the Gurdies 5-7 October – have booked accommodation at Grantville Lodge at cost of \$34.10/person/night. Paid \$500 deposit. Jenny Rejske and Terri Allen have drafted a program and can lead the excursions. Will charge \$70 for 2 nights. List at GM.

Edward Hunter Reserve plant list – Bruce King has requested we update this.

Summer Camp at Dargo 18-21 January 2013 – Dargo River Inn has cabins for \$50/person/night, linen and towels supplied. Cabins have kitchens and lounge. Meals available at licensed restaurant (pay individually).

Kevin Jones is retiring on 31 August. Replacement is Melissa Shankey(?). Will send best wishes and appreciation of the work he has done.

## Conservation Matters

Horseshoe Bend update from DSE – Sent comments after request for response. Concern expressed about money spent on tourist facilities rather than environmental improvements.

## GUEST SPEAKER FOR OCTOBER

**Deb Archer** works for Gippsland Water as an Environmental Scientist. She manages their biodiversity programs and works with the assets group in planning and delivery stages on environmental projects. She obtained a PhD in restoration ecology research on captive breeding programs in

South Africa, and has previously worked at Monash University, the Arthur Rylah Institute and the Department of Primary Industry.

## FOR THE DIARY

### Club Spring Camp at The Gurdies

Friday 5 to Sunday 7 October at Grantville Lodge, 200 Grantville-Glen Alvie Rd, Grantville.

[www.uccamping.org.au/grantville](http://www.uccamping.org.au/grantville)

Phone 5678 8370

**Cost:** \$70 pp for 2 nights

**Catering:** Self-catered so BYO food and bedding. There is a dining hall to prepare food and eat.

**Accommodation:** cabins with bunks and ensuite facilities. Possibility of roast dinner for \$15 on Saturday evening if we have 20 people.

More information: contact Wendy.

### Springsure Hill Landcare Group Walk in the Bush Saturday 10 November.

The club has been invited to join this activity at Sweetwater Creek Track, which is off Beards Track, Shady Creek – 2.6km up Beards Track from Old Sale Rd. Meet at 10am for a 10.15 start, finishing with a BBQ lunch at 12.30 supplied by the Landcare group.

Rob & Caroline Gully 0413 347 665

### Bird Challenge Saturday 1 December

More about this later.

### Club Summer Camp Friday 18 to Monday 21 January 2013 at Dargo

**Accommodation:** Dargo River Inn has cabins with kitchen and lounge. Linen and towels supplied. Meals are available at the licensed restaurant (pay individually). More information later.

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This is a short issue this month due to lack of material coupled with a three week holiday immediately prior to production. My apologies.

**DAYLIGHT SAVING STARTS 7 OCT**

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OCTOBER 2012

Issue No. 556



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- Excursion: Saturday 27 October      Dutson Downs Excursion. Meet 10am at Longford Hall or carpool from Traralgon Mexican Restaurant 9.15.
- Bird Group:      Tuesday 13 November (6<sup>th</sup> is Cup Day): Heyfield Wetlands. Meet there by 8.30 EDST. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)
- Botany Group:      Saturday 3 November: Sedges and rushes in the field, around Wonthaggi. Meet 10am at Guide Park (opposite hospital). Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246
- 

- Meeting: Friday 23 November      Grand Strzelecki Track – introduction by Ken Harris followed by a DVD about the track
- Excursion: Saturday 24 November      Walk part of the Macks Creek loop of the GST. Meet 10am at Balook Visitor Information Centre.
- 

FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE  
Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (NOV-DEC): 9 NOVEMBER 2012**

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

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## IMPORTANT NOTE

From **THIS MONTH** the club's **General Meetings** will be held in the **Newborough Uniting Church Hall** which is located at the corner of Old Sale Rd and Chamberlain Rd, entry from Chamberlain Rd.

### DIRECTIONS FOR UNITING CHURCH HALL

After leaving the highway at the Newborough exit drive straight ahead through the traffic lights (John Field Drive) then 1km to the next set of lights where you turn **RIGHT** (Old Sale Rd). At the third crossing of the median strip do a U-turn to get back to Chamberlain Rd. Turn **LEFT**, and the entry to the Church grounds, off-street parking and the hall is the **FIRST** drive on the **LEFT**.

### TOLERABLE FIRE INTERVALS

Tolerable Fire Intervals (TFI) was the topic of the August meeting of LVFNC and one I had been looking forward to. DSE Fire Planner, Jean-Marc Porigneaux spoke of the process of how, when, why and where Planned (or Controlled or Proscribed) Burning should take place in the Southern Fall (i.e. the south slopes of the Great Diving Range in West Gippsland). Asset protection is also part of his jurisdiction. Australia had been a relatively wet country, he said, until 10 million years ago. Then a drier period of about 9 million years followed by the last million years when it became even drier and fire became a prominent factor in vegetation evolution. Charcoal deposits in swamps and lakes are a testament to this.

The area which Jean-Marc has responsibility for, is public land and covers 5.1 million ha. Ninety five percent of planned burns are less than 5 Ha, 25% of which are naturally occurring fires caused by lightning. He said all forests rely on fires but the type, intensity, the weather during the season, extent of the fire and its severity are all factors. The intensity of the fire depends on solar and other weather conditions and dryness. Intensity affects fauna survival so that decisions need to be made as to the time of year to start a planned burn. Autumn is

favoured mainly as it is out of flowering and breeding season. Other considerations are taken. For example, is a Powerful Owl a breeding resident or visiting the area?

The 2006-7 fire in the Southern Fall which burnt out 1.1million Ha but it was patchy and high intensity. In contrast planned or asset protection burns leave large areas unburnt for re-colonisation by flora and fauna. Ridge lines may be canopy scorched while gullies are left unburnt with no crown scorching. Frequency of firing is important – not too short and not too long. (This varies with Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs). Because there are more than 300 EVCs, EVDs - Ecological Vegetation Divisions - have been created, which consist of 1 or more EVCs. There are 32 divisions of EVDs but only 9 are considered for fire management. (1))

In planning ecological burns consideration of how the flora responds is taken in account. For example growth from rootstock, lignotubers or epicormic growth and also the time it takes for a species to reach maturity. It is necessary to look at an EVC as a whole to assess how it responds to frequency intervals. Different codes are given for tolerable intervals to ensure all species are maintained. But not all burns can be achieved at tolerable intervals because they contain different zones, it becomes a trade off. There are different categories for seedlings and maximum tolerable intervals for species. Some species may not germinate unless there is a burn within a certain time.

In 1981 Noble and Slatyer (2) published minimum and maximum intervals taken to reach reproductive maturity for 5000 floral species. A single germination pulse after a fire may produce short lived species. Others, eg Mountain Ash set the maximum for fire intervals. Minimum Tolerable Fire Intervals have been done on benchmark species found in each EVC (see [www.dse.vic.gov.au/fireecology](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/fireecology)). In determining Lowland Forest TFI, *Leptospermum continentale* (Prickly Teatree) is a benchmark species for minimum TFI – 8 years before another Planned Burn. Maximum time between burns is 60 years or the species will die out in that area. Plans are done at landscape

level and therefore contain many EVCs which need more detailed study. Some pockets will be left to senesce.

For fauna there is a different response. Mainly birds and mammals have been studied and placed into 4 groups for re-population of species. Species A, for example raptors which become abundant rapidly then decline just as quickly. For species B, numbers drop after fire then rebuild. Species C may suffer a long decline then rebuild while species D, hollow dwellers, will not return until hollows appear in new growth. If the fire interval does not allow hollows to form, then Species D may never return. This information is built into ecological fire plans.

DSE maps of Southern Foothills show details of fire and logging history, including analysis. Planned burns are improving outcomes. Gully lines are preserved and more pockets of vegetation are maintained. There is more growth stage analysis. At present in this area there is more early years of vegetation growth because of the 2006-7 fires and little at the post maturity stage. Other factors being looked at are fire sensitive areas, how easy or hard burning is to do, priority burn areas, assessments – those areas to be burnt and those to be maintained, monitoring of selected burns (not all are monitored) and the fact that there may be a shorter burning period due to weather conditions.

In answering questions, Jean-Marc agreed that burning 5% of forested area in any one year was 'challenging'. He commented that when 3000ha was listed to be burnt, this was done in patches meaning a lesser percentage is actually burned. He hopes there will be changes in current policy. He also confirmed that wildfires do not count towards the 5% of area burnt.

This topic is not only controversial but is clearly one where so many factors need to be taken into account. Jean-Marc did an excellent job in explaining the process.

#### References

(1) Cheal, D. (2010) Growth stages and tolerable fire intervals for Victoria's native vegetation data sets. Fire and Adaptive Management Report No. 84. Department of Sustainability and Environment, East

Melbourne, Victoria. Australia. (Note: This publication is available in the LVFNC Library, along with other publications on this topic.)

(2) Noble, I.R. and Slatyer, R.O. (1981) Concepts and models of succession in vascular plant communities subject to recurrent fire, in Gill, A.M., Groves, R.H. and Noble, I.R. (eds.) *Fire and the Australian Biota*. (Australian Academy of Science: Canberra)

Jackie Tims

## MYRTLE RUST - A NEW THREAT

The fungus, *Uredo rangellii*, commonly known as Myrtle Rust, was first discovered in NSW in 2010 and soon afterwards in Queensland. It has now been discovered at about 60 sites in Victoria, including Tynong North and east Gippsland. As the name suggests, it is a disease of the *Myrtaceae* family which, in Australia, includes the following genera - *Eucalyptus*, *Callistemon* (Bottle-brushes), *Casuarina*, *Leptospermum* (Tea-trees), *Melaleuca* (Paperbarks), *Acmena* (Lilly-pilly) as well as many others. The Myrtle Rust National Management Group has agreed that it is not technically feasible to eradicate this disease so the focus now is on management to minimise its spread and impact. As well as being found in nurseries it has also been found in private gardens and bushland. The outbreak in east Gippsland was traced back to a commercial nursery. There are now no quarantine restrictions on the movement of plants between eastern states and the industry was supposed to self-regulate.

The yellow spores of myrtle rust can be easily spread by movement of infected plants and contaminated equipment, by wind, water and gravity, by animals and vehicles and on the clothing, jewellery, etc, of humans. If a plant is suspected of being infected, do not touch the suspect plant but either call the Department of Primary Industries on 1800 084 881 or email photos and a contact number to [plant.protection@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:plant.protection@dpi.vic.gov.au). For more information and photos of plants infected with myrtle rust, visit [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/myrtlerust](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/myrtlerust) or a fact sheet can be obtained from the DPI.

Estelle Adams

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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## SEANA SPRING 2012 CAMP AT BENDIGO

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club hosted the SEANA Spring 2012 Camp over the extended weekend of 17-20 August, the early date having been set to avoid clashing with the October gathering of the Australian Naturalists Network in Canberra. Despite decidedly bracing temperatures (it was just 3 degC in Kyneton at 1.00pm on the Friday as we travelled to Bendigo), the camp was enjoyed by well over 100 participants, including no less than 19 from our own club. Evening meals, talks and meetings were held at the spacious Mandurang Hall, around 12km south of the city centre.



*Bendigo Wax-flower*

The camp marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of combined camps under the auspices of SEANA and its predecessor associations, WVFNCA and VFNCA. A celebratory cake was cut and shared on Saturday evening, and memorabilia were displayed. It is worth noting that when VFNCA was set up in 1972, LVFNC members Ellen and Don Lyndon were members of the initial steering committee, with Ellen being interim secretary.

### Evening talks

**Friday – Bendigo's natural and human history.**

Following a welcome from Bendigo FNC President Jan Orr, Rob Moors presented an overview of the history – both human and natural – of Bendigo, which is located on Dja Dja Wurrung country. Early white settlement in the 1830s saw the take-up of the Mt Alexander and Ravenswood sheep runs. The discovery of alluvial gold in 1851 ushered in an economic boom. Extensive reef mining followed, as alluvial gold was soon exhausted. The municipality of Sandhurst (to be renamed Bendigo in 1891) was established in 1855 and by the early 1860s the town was serviced by a water reticulation system involving extensive tunnelling and was linked by rail to Melbourne, the line opening in 1862. An architectural boom resulted in Pall Mall becoming one of the finest late 19<sup>th</sup> century streetscapes in Australia.

The Ordovician sediment of the region was the source of its gold – laid down about 500 million years ago. Land movement created heat, which superheated water in which gold and quartz dissolved and were brought to the surface. Around 370 million years ago, hot magma rising through Ordovician material metamorphosed it, producing the granite of the Mt Alexander area to Bendigo's south.

Rob explained that the main natural vegetation in the district is Box-Ironbark forest, open woodland and, to the north, mallee (as in the Whipstick forest).

### Saturday – Moths of Victoria: talk and workshop

Saturday evening's presentation by Marilyn Hewish, Steve Williams and Ken Harris introduced the study of moths, seen as at a relatively early stage in Victoria. Leading off, Marilyn introduced the order Lepidoptera, comprising butterflies and moths, with 6 families of the former and 140 families (20,000+ species) of the latter in Australia. In showing some great photos from her moth-hunting travels around Victoria, Marilyn noted that it is not always simple to distinguish moths from butterflies – e.g. some moths are brightly coloured!

Steve followed on by reporting on his studies of moth ecology in Bendigo's Box-Ironbark forests. Predators of moths include bats, owls and other insectivorous birds, and

other insects including wasps. He has made rearing studies to identify what plant families furnish food for various moth species.

Ken took the activity into workshop mode by demonstrating moth-attracting techniques. The number of species attracted to the vertical sheets was somewhat limited by comparison with some of the demonstrations that Ken has conducted for our own club.

## **Sunday – Irrigation pasture: an unlikely spider habitat**

Dr Jenny Shield reported on research carried out on an irrigated dairy farm near Cohuna in northern Victoria. She presented results of a pitfall trapping survey to compare the assemblages of spider species across four types of habitat on the farm:

- pasture with shelterbelts of native vegetation (Yellow Box, River Red Gum and understorey);
- pasture without shelterbelts;
- shelterbelts;
- remnant vegetation (including Black Box).

Not surprisingly, the spider diversity was much greater in shelterbelts and remnant vegetation than in pasture. But the species found in pasture (typically from the Linyphiidae and Lycosidae families) were rarely encountered in the shelterbelts and remnant vegetation, which supported instead different Lycosidae species and members of the Clubionidae and Zodariidae families. Jenny concluded that shelterbelts did not have much effect on the species composition on irrigated pasture.

## **Excursion program**

A wide range of full- and half-day excursions on Saturday and Sunday focussed on botany, birds, mammals and geology across the diverse landforms and ecosystems radiating out from Bendigo. There were also opportunities to explore Bendigo's significant urban landscape.

Here is a brief overview of just two excursions.

## **Northern Plains wetlands (full day Saturday)**

Ben Goonan, from the Northern Central CMA, led an excellent excursion which explored a diverse range of ephemeral aquatic habitats across the northern plains region of the Victorian Riverina. These wetlands have been transformed by the flooding rains of 2010/11 which followed a decade of drought. The use of a bus meant that all participants benefited from Ben's considerable knowledge of the regional ecology.

Heading north through Huntly on the fringe of the Whipstick Forest took us into the Kamarooka area, observing Golden Wattle and Whirrakee Wattle in flower amidst remnant Box-Ironbark forest, grassy woodland and then mallee woodland (including Blue and Green Mallee, Kamarooka Mallee and the larger-leaved Bull Mallee).

We enjoyed spotting two pairs of Brolgas and a Banded Plover on our way to Tang Tang Swamp, with dominant River Red Gums in Plains Grassy Wetland. Ducks seen at this swamp included Hardhead and Chestnut Teal.



*Tang Tang Swamp*

An interesting sighting at our lunch spot, Leichardt Conservation Reserve (no connection with Ludwig!) was a conical mud Chough's nest high in a eucalypt.

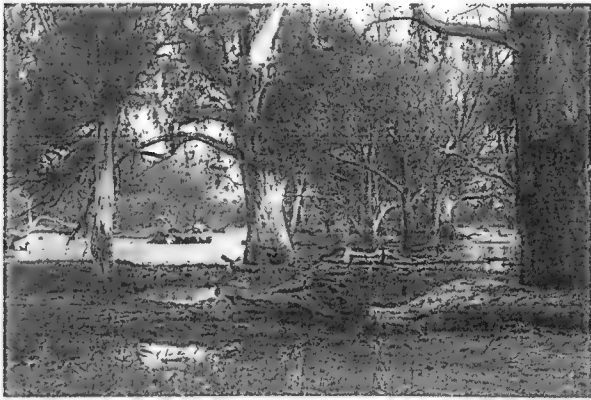
Pollocks Swamp was fringed by River Red Gums, with many young plants emerging on the recently flooded flat areas. These and other local swamps support various threatened EVCs including Plains Grassy



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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Wetland, Plains Swampy Woodland and Lignum Swamp.



*Pollocks Swamp*

A final stop on the return to Bendigo introduced us to the tiny winter-flowering Plains Rice-flower, *Pimelia spinescens* subsp *spinescens*, listed as critically endangered. This plant is a stunted shrub, 5-30cm in height, with small pale yellow flowers and small green elliptical leaves up to 10mm long and 3mm wide; its stems are tipped with spines.



*Bushy Needlewood*

## One Tree Hill and Diamond Hill (half day Sunday)

This excursion, led by Matt Comer with extra input from Jane Cleary, proved to be stunning for its rich diversity of spring wildflowers. Plants seen at One Tree Hill, part of the Greater Bendigo National Park, included:

- The fairly rare Bushy Parrot-pea, *Dillwynia ramosissima*;
- Bendigo Wax-flower, *Philotheca verrucosa*;
- The blue-flowered Shrub Violet, *Hybanthus floribundus*;

- Bushy Needlewood, *Hakea sericea*;
- Leopard Orchid;
- Nodding Greenhood (Matt noted that seven greenhood species are found here);
- Golden Wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*.

At Diamond Hill, the major point of interest was a patch of Sticky Boronia, *B. anemonifolia*, growing in profusion in a fenced-off area. Also worth a mention to conclude, the Goldfields Grevillea, *G. dryophylla*.

All in all, the camp provided a great opportunity to learn more about an incredibly diverse part of Victoria – many thanks, Bendigo FNC friends.



*Sticky Boronia*

Philip Rayment

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 24.9.2012

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 26 October:** Biodiversity Management at Dutson Downs – Deb Archer

**Saturday 27 October:** Dutson Downs excursion. Meet 10am at Longford Hall or carpool from Mexican Rest. Traralgon 9.15.

**Friday 23 November:** Presentation on Grand Strzelecki Track – Ken Harris introduction followed by a DVD about it.

**Saturday 24 November:** Related excursion, walking part of Macks Creek loop of the GST. Meet 10am at Balook Info Centre.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 3 November – sedges and rushes in the field around Wonthaggi. Meet 10am at Guide Park, Graham Street, (opposite hospital). Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

**Bird Group:** Tuesday 13 November (6<sup>th</sup> is Cup Day): Heyfield Wetlands. Meet there by 8.30 EDST. Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

**Finance – Balances:** Cash Mgt Trading A/c \$4053.43. Term Deposit \$12,000.00. Term deposit matures 18 October. Will add \$1000 and reinvest for best term available.

### Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

Meeting room for general meeting – start at Uniting Church Hall Newborough in October. Have inspected premises and got instructions for its use. Alix has a key and Wendy will forward meeting dates to Jeanette Young. Storage of equipment currently held at LCHS: David M will take screen, Phil – slide projector, Wendy – supper box, Jackie – PA system. Wendy will bring extra powerboard. Old PA system to go to second hand shop.

Program Planning Meeting – a good number of choices was available thanks to input from members. There is a charge of \$150 to Bunurong Environment Centre for Mike Cleeland's talk and excursion on megafauna.

Spring Camp to the Gurdies 5-7 October – 20 staying at camp. Catered meal for Saturday night \$15 each, so cost will now be \$85 per person. Excursions in the local area will be run by Jenny Rejske and Terri Allen with notes and lists provided. Mike Cleeland

will run a session on geology Saturday morning at a cost of \$50 payable to Bunurong Environment Centre. Will send details to participants this week.

Community Groups Expo 14 October at Old Gippsdown – waiting for final details. Will use digital photo frame; David M and Ken H will prepare photos. Sell books, brochures etc. Ken H, David M, Wendy and Jackie available. Phil to bring club banner.

### Conservation Matters

Maryvale mill meeting 18 October – John Poppins will be away and would like someone to go in his place. He has sent minutes and agenda. John has been invited as a rep on a new recycling project group so will represent the club.

### GUEST SPEAKER FOR NOVEMBER

Ken Harris will introduce the topic of the Grand Strzelecki Track to be followed by a DVD about the track. On Saturday we will be walking part of the Macks Creek loop of the track after meeting at the Balook Visitors Information Centre at 10am.

### FOR THE DIARY

#### Springsure Hill Landcare Group Walk in the bush Saturday 10 November.

Full details – see September Naturalist.  
Rob & Caroline Gully 0413 347 665

#### Bird Challenge Saturday 1 December

Contact: Alix Williams 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)

#### Club Christmas Party Saturday 8 Dec

This year at David & Jacqui Mules' property at Narracan, from 12 noon. Full details next month.

#### Summer Members' Night Fri 11 Jan 2013

Open theme – your chance to show and tell.

#### Wildflower Walk Saturday 12 Jan 2013

Join the Friends of Baw Baw NP on the plateau – always wonderful!

#### Club Summer Camp Friday 18 to Monday 21 January 2013 at Dargo

Dargo River Inn has cabins with kitchen and lounge. Linen and towels supplied. Meals are available at the licensed restaurant (pay individually). More information next month.



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Club:</u>	<u>Secretary:</u>	<u>Meeting:</u>
<b>Latrobe Valley FNC Inc.</b>	<b>Secretary</b> Mrs W Savage LVFNC Inc. PO Box 1205 Morwell 3840 ☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsi.net.au  <b>Assistant Secretary</b> Mr Ken Smith ☎ 5134 3312	7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Latrobe Community Health Service, Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825
<b>Sale &amp; District FNC</b>	Mrs M G Cooper 95 Reeve Street Sale 3850 ☎ 5144 4224	7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month at The Gwen Webb Hall Market St, off Raglan St, near Zion College, Sale Vic 3850
<b>Bairnsdale FNC Inc.</b>	Ms Wendy Parker PO Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875 ☎ 5152 2615	7.30 pm on the third Friday of each month at Noweyung, 84 Goold Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, should not exceed 1,000 words, and may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should be addressed to:	Mrs Gill Bremner The Editor LVFNC Inc. PO Box 719 TRARALGON VIC 3844	Phone: 5174 1730  Email: gill@scribex.net
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Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number/email has changed.

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Family \$50 ☐ Single \$35 ☐ Junior/Student \$25 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

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Issue No. 557



# *Latrobe Valley Naturalist*



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### LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.

- Meeting: Friday 23 November      Grand Strzelecki Track – introduction by Ken Harris followed by a DVD about the track.
- Excursion: Saturday 24 November      Walk part of the Macks Creek loop of the GST. Meet 10am at Balook Visitor Information Centre.
- Bird Group:      Saturday 1 December Bird Challenge Count. See page 6 for more information. Contact: Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au)
- Botany Group:      No botany this month due to the Bird Challenge Count. Next botany day Saturday 2 February – Dargo plants.
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### CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY, SATURDAY 8 DECEMBER, 12 NOON, See page 6

- Meeting: Friday 11 January 2013      Summer Members' Night – open theme.
- Friends of Baw Baw Wildflower Walk Saturday 12 January 2013. See page 6.
- Club summer Camp at Dargo 18-21 January 2013. See page 6.
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### FRIENDS OF MOUNT WORTH PARK Contact: Merrin Butler ☎ 5634 4256

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### FRIENDS OF EDWARD HUNTER HERITAGE BUSH RESERVE Contact: Latrobe City Council ☎ 1300 367 700

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### FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK Contact: Ken Harris ☎ 5122 3137

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### FRIENDS OF BAW BAW Contact: Eileen Laidlaw ☎ 5160 1312, Alix Williams ☎ 51273393

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### VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP Contact: Graeme Rowe ☎ 5662 2449

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### FRIENDS OF TARRA-BULGA NATIONAL PARK Contact: Craig Campbell – Visitors Centre ☎ 5196 6166

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### SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY PO Box 60, Inverloch 3996. Bunurong Environment Centre ☎ 5674 3738

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### FRIENDS OF TRARALGON RAILWAY RESERVOIR CONSERVATION RESERVE Contacts: James Reeves ☎ 5176 6591 (Sec.). City Recreation Liaison Office ☎ 5128 5422

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### HEYFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE COMMITTEE Contacts: Ron Kerr ☎ 5148 2575 (President) Wendy Rhodes ☎ 5148 3058 (Secretary)

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### FRIENDS OF TYERS PARK Contact: Jim Stranger ☎ 5191 8312

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### DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE (JAN-FEB): 1 FEBRUARY 2013

LVFNC web page: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lvfnc>

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## SPRING CAMP 2012

This year our Spring camp was held in the south-eastern coastal area of Westernport around Corinella, Grantville and the Gurdies. We stayed at the Grantville Uniting Church camp which is set in the bush a couple of kilometres back from the coast. There were 22 of us staying at the camp, and our excursions were organised and led by Terri Allen and Jenny Rejske who showed us around 'their area'. Their local knowledge of the history, plants and birds made the excursions and the information they could impart particularly interesting.

### Saturday morning

We met at Corinella and Terri Allen started us off with the history of the very significant area we were visiting called Settlement Point, which is the name of the cliff top lookout to which we later walked.

Governor Darling established the settlement (1826-1828) to foil a French attempt to claim Western Port. England and France seemed to be constantly at war, explorer D'Urville was interested in Western Port, so the French interest had to be foiled. Apart from inhibiting the French, the purpose was to explore the countryside and report on its qualities. At first Fort Dumaesque was the site (Rhyll), but an insecure water supply caused the move to Corinella.

Using convict labour, bricks were made and a small township sprang up. William Hovell, with three convicts, set off south, locating Flinders' Shallow Lagoon (Andersons Inlet), Wright River (Powlett) and good quality coal (Harmers Haven).

When the French threat no longer existed and the settlement became too expensive to maintain, Settlement Point was abandoned; one bull, six cows and calves, three boars and twenty pigs were set free. The pigs disappeared, but the cows multiplied, crossed the Bass and Powlett rivers and gave the name Wild Cattle Run to the first station which encompassed the Wonthaggi area.

It was to Settlement Point that Strzelecki and his party made when he crossed Gippsland a few years later.

Our excursion to the Corinella foreshore was led by local palaeontologist and poet Mike Cleeland. Mike has the distinction of having had a large early cretaceous fossil, which he found in the Wonthaggi area, named after him. *Koolasuchus cleelandi* were amphibians which existed about 120 million years ago in the rift valleys of southern Australia until they were displaced by crocodiles.

After a brief discussion on the features of igneous rocks and crystal formation we walked from the Corinella pier across the foreshore to the cliffed headland of Settlement Point. This is one of the major exposures of deeply weathered volcanic rocks in Victoria where the lava (basalt) and tuff (consolidated volcanic ash) are weathered to red and yellow basaltic clays. The cliffs themselves, at up to 15 metres, are some of the highest on the mainland coast of Westernport Bay. Their exposed strata indicated several successive eruptions (we counted at least four) with a considerable time elapsing between eruptions.

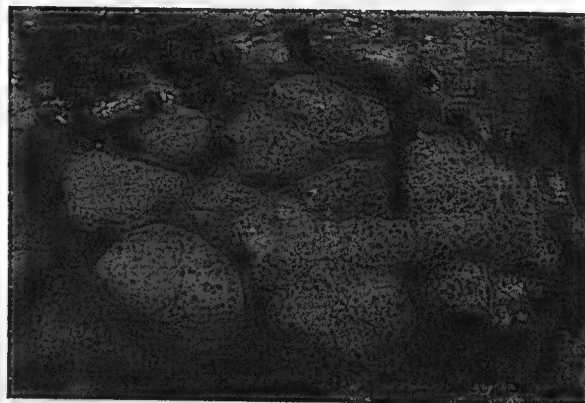


Photo: Phil Rayment

Fronting the cliffs is a shore platform tessellated with low columnar polygons. An interesting feature of this jointing pattern was the weathering of the outer material of the column to leave a "footstone" of harder parent material in its centre. This process no doubt gave rise to the many cricket ball sized basalt pebbles lying around on the platform at the base of the cliff. There were also signs of a linear fissure eruption where the lava had risen through a fault in the strata. Some of the rock layers were on edge indicating a monocline had formed over a fault line. Atop the volcanics were Haunted Hill

gravels which stretch from Central Gippsland to the coast.

Further to the west of the jetty was a low cliff which showed horizons containing shells. It is thought that this was prior beach built when the sea level was one to two metres higher than at present during the Holocene period; the most recent geological epoch, going back about 11,000 years.

Not all the participants were always concentrating on the geology, and often the group would be spread along the beach like 'Brown's cows' looking at plants, birds and sea life.

Terri pointed out a slightly different *Myoporum* to the Common Boobialla *Myoporum insulare*. This was Sticky Boobialla, *M. viscosum*. Its leaves were shorter and broader, and the petals of the flowers were noticeably more pointed at the tips. The 'Flora' now has it classified as *M. sp 1*.

Along the base of the cliffs were growing Seablite (*Sueda australis*), Sea Box (*Alyxia buxifolia*) and both pig face or Karkalla (*Carpobrotus rossii*) and Rounded Noon Flower (*Disphyma crassifolium*). On the shore were Beaded Glasswort and an old Shrubby Glasswort with a thick twisted trunk lay on the rocks. Some large mangroves grew in the tidal zone.



Photo: Phil Rayment

A large sand island covered in grass had developed off shore with recent changes in erosion and deposition, and it was a haven for water birds. Some of the birds noted were Eastern Curlew, Australian Pied Oystercatchers, half a dozen or more White-faced Herons and some Royal Spoonbills. A

Great Egret was feeding along the tide line and a pair of Australian Shelduck flew past.

After an interesting two hours of exploration we headed to the shelter for a welcome 'cuppa', which was followed by another walk before lunch.

This was along part of a narrow 7 kilometre reserve of remnant coastal vegetation, stretching from the east end of Corinella to Coronet Bay, which is managed by a DSE appointed committee. We walked to the lookout on the top of the cliffs, above the point on the beach to which we had walked on our geology excursion. Jenny Rejske is a member of this committee and she was able to show us the amazing revegetation that has been achieved. A previously bare grazed area including a sports oval and tennis courts is now covered in a thick sward of kangaroo grass and other native grasses and herbs. The kangaroo grass was most attractive in full flower. The top of the cliffs are covered in trees and shrubs: Drooping Sheoak, Sweet Bursaria, Tree Violet and Acacia paradoxa to name a few. An interesting small plant that was spotted was Sweet Hound's Tongue (*Cynoglossum sueveolens*) which has fragrant white forget-me-not flowers above a basal rosette of light green leaves. Whilst at the lookout, David Mules pointed out a Crimson-Eastern Rosella hybrid perched nearby.

By the time we returned to the shelter for our lunch the predicted rain had arrived. It drove in against the backs of those unfortunate enough to be seated on the windward side, and as it showed no sign of abating we decided to return to camp to warm up and see if it would clear for our afternoon excursions.

Wendy & Ken Savage

*Hopefully there will be reports of more of the weekend in future issues.*



## COUNTING WADERS IN CORNER INLET

Talk by Susan Taylor, Senior Flora and Fauna Officer, DSE, based at Yarram Office, 28 September, 2012

### Why is Corner Inlet good habit for waders (also known as shorebirds)?

Susan explained that Corner Inlet includes all inland waters from the Yanakie isthmus to the start of the 90-mile beach near Woodside. The Inlet is a drowned river valley – the waters having flooded the estuaries of rivers as the sea level rose over time. Corner Inlet is relatively shallow and has a tidal range of just over two metres. Illustrating the geography with an aerial photograph taken at high tide, Susan pointed out Bass Strait, the string of barrier islands, the entrances, Wilson's promontory and the Strzeleckis. The Inlet is so shallow that at low tide about 75% of the area is uncovered, revealing a huge expanse of sandy and muddy flats which are excellent feeding grounds for waders. Susan pointed out the large sand spits where the waders roost at high tide. The birds' lives are controlled by the tides. Both counting and catching of waders is carried out at high tide when the birds congregate on the sand spits.

Corner Inlet is among the top three most important sites in Australia for waders. It is the most important breeding site in Australia for Pied Oystercatchers, a species that breeds locally. However, the great majority of the waders are migratory species that breed in the Arctic regions and 'overwinter' here during our warmer months. Corner Inlet is a Ramsar Wetland - Australia has entered international agreements to conserve the wetland habitat. Also, Corner Inlet is included in the East Asian – Australasian Site Network - the countries in the Site Network work co-operatively to conserve habitat of the waders in the East Asian – Australasian flyway.

Susan explained that the work of the *Victorian Wader Study Group* in placing metal bands and coloured plastic flags on waders in Corner Inlet has contributed to the building up of information about the routes taken by waders during their migration. Colour coding of leg flags allows bird-

watchers throughout the flyway to identify the locality where a bird was 'flagged' and report this to a central database. Susan showed photos of waders carrying coloured flags and explained that, for example, orange indicates Victoria, yellow indicates North-western Australia, white over black indicates China and white over blue, Korea.

### Counting waders in Corner Inlet – What are the results?

Counting of waders in Australia began in 1981 and is carried out at approximately 700 sites in June (for migratory waders this includes the non-breeding population only) and January or February (the total population). Records are kept for twenty-seven wader species (20 migratory waders and 7 resident species). Currently, counting is managed by *Birdlife Australia* under the *Shorebirds 2020 program*.

Susan showed us data and graphs from an article recently published in *Stilt\**. The total number of waders in Corner Inlet (summer counts) has fallen from 35,000/40,000 to just under 30,000 over the 30 years from 1982 to 2009. This represents a 23% decline. Fourteen species of migratory waders and two resident species chosen for further analysis by the authors of the article.

The resident species examined in detail, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers, show no decline. Although populations fluctuate from year to year, ten species of migratory waders show evidence of a sudden drop in population in the early- to mid-1990s. These are Curlew Sandpiper, Great Knot, Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, Grey Plover, Eastern Curlew, Common Greenshank, Greater Sand Plover, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Lesser Sand Plover. Susan illustrated this with two species, Red Knot and Curlew Sandpiper, showing photographs of the birds and the population graphs. The Red Knot population plummeted in 1993/94 and appears to have declined further in 2009. The Curlew Sandpiper population plummeted in 1995 and also appears to have declined further in 2009.

### What do the species that show most decline have in common?

It appears that the problem is not in Corner Inlet. It has been found that the species showing the greatest decline are those that rely most heavily on the mud-flats and sand-flats of the Yellow Sea feeding grounds on both their northern and southern migrations. On the northern migration the Yellow Sea is the last staging site before reaching the Arctic breeding grounds. Industrialisation had led to the 'reclamation' of extensive areas of the intertidal flats in the Yellow Sea over recent years, reducing the habitat of the waders. For example, South Korea completed a huge project by closing the final sections of a sea wall at Saemangeum in 2006. Counts of Great Knot, a species that relied heavily on that part of the Yellow Sea, fell by 65,000. Red Knot and Great Knot are very particular about which area, and which food, the need. The paths of the overwintering populations of Great Knot from North-western Australia, Queensland and Southern Australia all converge at the Yellow Sea. Similarly, the paths of Red Knot from New Zealand, South-eastern Australia and North-western Australia also converge at the Yellow Sea.

Bar-tailed Godwit and Red-necked Stint populations in Corner Inlet do not show a marked decline. Bar-tailed Godwit are less reliant on the Yellow Sea, calling there only on their northern migration to Alaska and returning to eastern Australia in a non-stop flight. They show a smaller decline. Red-necked Stint, showing no decline, use the Yellow Sea but are more flexible in their food requirements, and more ready to move around, than either species of Knot.

Susan then explained that Corner Inlet is towards the southern extreme of the geographical range of inhabited by migratory waders. We would expect the decline in population to be noticed first, and most markedly, in localities near the extremes of the range.

A lot of interest was shown during question time and the discussion that developed. Many factors could influence yearly fluctuations in population counts. Breeding success in the Arctic would depend upon factors such as the weather and on the prevalence of predators in the 'boom and bust' ecology of the Arctic tundra. Counting

in Corner Inlet is carried out by boat and weather conditions vary from year to year, rough seas can make counting from a boat, using binoculars, difficult. Counting is done at the known roosting sites, but flocks could sometimes be hidden in more sheltered places. In replying to a question Susan reminded us of the importance of industrialisation to the people of the countries near the Yellow Sea and that we all benefit from this industrialisation when we purchase cheap manufactured products from the area.

Susan was asked for an update on the Red Knot population at Delaware Bay, which was the subject of a recent talk by Susan. We were pleased to hear that this year, for the first time, an increase in population was evident. It seems that placing limits on taking Horseshoe Crabs might at last be bringing the desired results.

\* Details of population studies and discussion of possible causes of decline are available in the published article upon which Susan based part of her talk: *Stilt 61 (2012): 3-18 Trends of Shorebirds in Corner Inlet, Victoria, 1982-2011*. Clive Minton, Peter Dann, Alice Ewing, Susan Taylor, Roz Jessop, Peter Anton, and Robert Clemens. This can be accessed on the website of the East Asian - Australasian Site Network: <http://www.awsg.org.au/stilt>

Margaret Rowe

## REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 22.10.2012

### General Meetings & Excursions

**Friday 23 November:** Presentation on Grand Strzelecki Track – Ken Harris introduction followed by a DVD about the track.

**Saturday 24 November:** Related excursion, walking part of Macks Creek loop of the GST. Meet 10am at Balook Visitors Information Centre.

**Botany Group:** Saturday 1 December – no botany due to Bird Challenge. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

Next botany day will be Saturday 2 February to look at Dargo plants.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

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**Bird Group:** Bird Challenge. Alix Williams  
☎ 5127 3393, [alixw@spin.net.au](mailto:alixw@spin.net.au) See p. 6.

**Christmas Party Saturday 8 December** at David and Jacquie Mules' place, Narracan.

**Finance** – Balances: Cash Mgt Trading A/c \$4215.25. Term Deposit \$12,000.00.

## **Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business**

Meeting room for general meeting – start at Uniting Church Hall Newborough on Friday. Alix will open up and Wendy will lock up and return key to Alix. Equipment previously held in LCHS cupboard has been distributed amongst committee.

Program for 2013 nearly completed.

Spring Camp to the Gurdies attended by 25 members with varied and interesting excursions. Have thanked Jenny and Terri for leading.

Community Groups Expo 14 October at Old Gippsdown – very few people visited stall and display, but weather was pleasant.

SEANA is looking for a new website coordinator as Ern Perkins wishes to relinquish the role.

Christmas party planning – Gill will bring cake, Phil will do quiz, Jackie punch bowl and lollies, Wendy punch base.

Summer Camp to Dargo Friday 18 to Monday 21 January – will stay at Dargo River Inn in cabins which have a lounge room, kitchen, shower, toilet and separate bedrooms. All bedding and towels supplied. \$50 per person each night for cabins, or \$15 per night for a powered site. Self catering, but evening meals can be bought at the Dargo River Inn (bar and restaurant). We will ask people to eat there on Saturday night. Phil will plan excursions. Will start booking list at GM. Secretary will liaise with venue re numbers and cabin allocations, but members will pay Dargo River Inn directly on arrival.

Wildflower Walk in Baw Baw NP (Mt St Gwinear) 12 January 2013 – FOBB would like club members to come and help with plant identification. Will be looking for id of new weeds that may be found in the area.

Purple Diuris orchid count – Dawson count 17 October had 4 times as many orchids in marked area than last year. Longford count to be done 25 October.

Ken Harris led a walk for Boolarra South Landcare group at old mill site along track to Boolarra cemetery and is providing them with a plant list.

ANN Get-together at Canberra attended by 4 club members. Excellent 8 day program. Phil will put some highlights in Naturalist. Interim steering committee established to decide future of ANN group. Next Get-together in Tasmania 2014.

## **Conservation Matters**

New orchid species discovered for the Latrobe Valley *Caladenia vulgaris* and *Chiloglottis jeanesii* by local ANOS group.

Scarlet Honeyeaters found at Uralla by bird group, new sighting – David M put on Birdline.

## **ANN 2012 GET-TOGETHER**

Four club members, Bruce and Estelle Adams, Phil Rayment and Gill Bremner went to Canberra in mid-October for the biennial ANN Get-together hosted by the Field Naturalists Association of Canberra. The excellent 8-day program combined field trips, institutional visits and lectures. Watch for a full report early next year.

## **SCARLET HONEYEATER - BIRDLINE REPORT**

On October 2 the LVFNC Bird Group visited Uralla Nature Reserve, Trafalgar. We saw 6-8 or more male and female Scarlet Honeyeater, Rose Robin male and female; both firsts in the reserve. Also Blue-winged Parrot and Brown Gerygone.

This information was reported to Birdline Victoria along with the VicRoads map reference. Birdline Victoria is an internet site for the reporting of rare or unusual birds outside their normal range.

The next day, three members of the Ringwood Field Nats were there looking. We don't know how many other bird observers made the trip to try to see this beautiful little bird - so far west from normal locations.

# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## SUMMER ACTIVITIES

### Bird Challenge Count Day 1 December

On Saturday, December 1 Club members, their relatives, friends and anyone who is interested in birds can take part in the Australia-wide Bird Challenge Count Day.

We have been doing this since 1998 in an area from Yarragon to Traralgon, Tyers to the Morwell National Park. Participants are organised into groups with an experienced "bird" person as leader and set a series of sites in which to observe and count birds. Some members are able to identify birds and others assist by spotting them.

Data on the types and numbers of birds recorded are sent to Birdlife Australia. This information provides ideas about bird populations and movement in the area.

It provides a great opportunity for people to learn about the local birds.

If you are interested in joining in the fun; please contact Alix on 5127 3393 or [alix@spin.net.au](mailto:alix@spin.net.au).

## CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY

### Saturday 8 December from 12 noon

At David & Jacqui Mules' property at 408 Connection Rd, Narracan (opposite the hall), BYO food and drinks and chair. BBQ, and water for tea and coffee available. Punch and Christmas cake provided. And the quiz will be on again!



## SUMMER MEMBERS' NIGHT

Friday 11 January 2013. Open theme – your chance to show and tell.

## FOBB WILDFLOWER WALK 12 JAN

Join Friends of Baw Baw NP on Saturday 12 January 2013, to Mt St Gwinear.

Meet at DSE Office, Parkers Corner at 9.30am for a 10.00am departure (after car pooling). Back mid-afternoon.

Two walks – for able and not-so-able so all can enjoy and learn about the area.

For more details and to say that you are coming: contact Alix on 5127 3393 or [alix@spin.net.au](mailto:alix@spin.net.au).

## CLUB SUMMER CAMP

**When:** Friday 18 - Monday 21 January 2013

**Where:** Dargo River Inn.

**Accommodation:** Cabins with kitchen and lounge, shower, toilet and separate bedrooms. All bedding and towels are supplied. Self-catering, but evening meals can be bought at the Dargo River Inn (bar and restaurant). We plan to eat there together on Saturday night (pay separately). Bring food for breakfasts and packed lunches.

**Cost:** \$50 per person per night for cabins. \$15 per night for powered site. To be paid directly to Dargo River Inn.

Names on list as soon as possible please. Wendy will liaise with venue re numbers and cabin allocations. Phil will plan excursions.

## FROM THE EDITOR

A big thank you to all contributors and helpers throughout the year. Best wishes for a safe and happy Christmas/New Year to all club members, family and friends.



# Latrobe Valley Naturalist

## DETAILS OF CONTRIBUTING CLUBS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

### Club:

**Latrobe Valley  
FNC Inc.**

### Secretary:

**Secretary**  
Mrs W Savage  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 1205  
Morwell 3840  
☎ 5634 2246 Email: wsavage@dcsl.net.au

### Meeting:

7.30 pm on the fourth Friday of  
each month at the Latrobe  
Community Health Service,  
Fowler Street, Moe Vic 3825

**Sale & District FNC**

**Assistant Secretary**  
Mr Ken Smith  
☎ 5134 3312

Mrs M G Cooper  
95 Reeve Street  
Sale 3850  
☎ 5144 4224

7.30 pm on the first Friday of each  
month at The Gwen Webb Hall  
Market St, off Raglan St, near  
Zion College, Sale Vic 3850

**Bairnsdale FNC Inc.**

Ms Wendy Parker  
PO Box 563  
Bairnsdale 3875  
☎ 5152 2615

7.30 pm on the third Friday of each  
month at Noweyung, 84 Goold  
Street, Bairnsdale Vic 3875

*Latrobe Valley Naturalist* is the official publication of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club Inc. The Club subscription includes the "Naturalist".

Brief contributions and short articles on any aspect of natural history are invited from members of all clubs. Articles, including those covering Club speakers and excursions, would typically be around one A4 side in length, should not exceed 1,000 words, and may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this magazine rests with the author of the article.

Contributions should  
be addressed to:

Mrs Gill Bremner  
The Editor  
LVFNC Inc.  
PO Box 719  
TRARALGON VIC 3844

Phone: 5174 1730

Email: gill@scribex.net

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send remittance with completed form to Mr David Mules, LVFNC Inc, 408 Connection Rd, Narracan 3824. Please indicate if address/phone number/email has changed.

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Phone (Private) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$50 ☐ Single \$35 ☐ Junior/Student \$25 ☐ Naturalist \$20 ☐

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